

Neighbourhood Governance, Social Exclusion and Urban Renaissance: a case study of Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne.

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Neighbourhood Governance: Capacity for social integration

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Part 1 Background

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This paper explores neighbourhood governance and social exclusion in the Walker neighbourhood in the East End of Newcastle upon Tyne. The paper is based upon research conducted as part of an EU Framework 5 project entitled Neighbourhood Governance and the Capacity for Social Integration. Research was carried out between 2002-2004 in nine countries, examining a total of ten neighbourhoods; two in the UK - Newcastle and London – and one each in Ireland, Sweden, Italy, Portugal, Holland, Greece, Germany and Denmark.

Underpinning the research has been a growing awareness and concern amongst the EU and member countries about the dangers of social polarisation. Government departments and committees have been set up specifically to investigate and respond to the challenges of social exclusion. Previous research by the same team explored the everyday life experiences of people living in deprived neighbourhoods: the socio-spatial setting within which many social exclusion problems become manifest. This research found that neighbourhood governance, the way in which places function, can exacerbate social exclusion.

The current research, the basis of this paper, has an explicit concern with the relationship between neighbourhood governance and social integration. The research focuses on the question of whether systems of neighbourhood governance can help, or indeed hinder, the capacity for social integration. A central hypothesis underpinning the research is that: 'the dominant structures of neighbourhood governance are not very well adapted to combat social exclusion and in some cases may be counter-productive, that is, 'impede the development of self generative capacities present in the deprived neighbourhoods' (Allen et al 2000). An important question is whether there is untapped potential for increasing levels of social integration through the development of local relationships and changes in the way that local services are delivered.

The research began with the premise that the neighbourhood can be understood as a bundle of problems. Within the project 'neighbourhood' has a spatial definition; recognising that boundaries are always to some extent arbitrary and the importance of relationships with the surrounding area. The neighbourhood unit is understood as the interface between area-based policies and broader processes and the place where much of everyday life is experienced and negotiated and where exclusionary processes are often most explicitly expressed. However, neighbourhood is also an underdeveloped dimension of formal government and governance structures.

The concept of governance covers the range of formal and informal relationships which make an entity. Neighbourhood governance is about the way in which a place functions and key questions centre on who is making decisions and how they are made. In every neighbourhood a range of service providers exist with their own *modus operandi* and priorities. This results in complex patterns of service delivery which do not always reach people in the way that they need.

Fragmented systems and structures of neighbourhood governance often fail to produce a coherent vision for the neighbourhood and are not well designed or adapted to combat social exclusion. However there are many formal and informal links which seek to overcome the fragmentation and the research explores where and how this works. One of the premises of the research is that neighbourhood governance may be doing little to address the problems of social exclusion and may even be exacerbating it. The research explores the scope for neighbourhood governance to contribute towards social re-integration. The case studies explore conditions of everyday life in the neighbourhood and the mechanisms of neighbourhood governance; investigating the role and nature of agency interventions attempting to combat social exclusion and the delivery of local services. The case studies

also examine everyday life in the neighbourhood from the perspective of local residents, their experience and feelings about the neighbourhood and how it is managed.

1.2 The UK Context

This paper explores the way in which social exclusion and neighbourhood governance are interacting with urban renaissance processes in one of the case study neighbourhoods, Walker in the east end of Newcastle upon Tyne. The research team in Newcastle had previously studied social exclusion in the Walker neighbourhood between 1998-9. The final report *Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne: A Neighbourhood in Transition* (Madanipour and Bevan 1999) provides a general background to everyday life issues in the neighbourhood. At the time of the study significant changes were occurring in the UK policy context and have continued to develop, impacting upon governance structures and approaches. In order to contextualise the research framework for the Walker study the following section reviews some of the UK policy initiatives which provide an overarching framework for the delivery of local services and are helping shift local level relationships.

Social Exclusion

The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was set up in 1997 tasked with developing a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. In 1998 they published *Bringing Britain Together: National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*: this focussed on improving the lot of the poorest people through more joined up solutions. The strategy rested upon ideas about investing in people and communities, developing integrated approaches with clear leadership and diverting mainstream resources to the poorest areas. Following a period of extensive consultation through 18 Policy action teams the result was the publication of *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan* (SEU 2001). This report identified neighbourhood management as a 'potentially radical solution to the problems of deprived neighbourhoods' and 'one radical way of devolving power to the neighbourhoods' (2001:51). It used the concept of neighbourhood management to imply a localised neighbourhood governance structure and delivery of locally tailored initiatives. However, detailed linkages, for example, to the role of local authorities, regeneration or the management of social housing were not developed.

Political modernisation and the neighbourhood

The neighbourhood has also become of significance in the UK political modernisation project, which has a core concern with the operation and mechanics of local democracy. These are discussed in the 1998 *White Paper: Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People*. Of new political management structures it said:

The right structures are crucial if councils are to be responsive to their local communities, and are to tap the interest and enthusiasm of local people (1998: 24).

Hence local authorities have adopted cabinet style approaches where a separate executive exercises political leadership and back-bench councillors take on a scrutiny role. As part of this approach more emphasis is placed on localised structures – such as area committees. This concern with the democratic importance of neighbourhood is also reflected in *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* (SEU 2001).

Urban Renaissance

A third strand of policy is urban renaissance. In 1999 *Towards an Urban Renaissance* was published which talked about promoting sustainable and socially inclusive communities, advocating the use of design-led city-wide strategies and spatial master plans to halt and reverse decline in the urban centres. In a sense however, Newcastle has been ahead of central government in forging a renaissance agenda (Cameron 2003). In 1999 Newcastle City Council proposed that a radical strategy was needed to address the problems associated with long-term industrial decline and out-migration from the city. The twenty year plan to reverse the fortunes of the city called *Going for Growth* was launched in 2001.

In the Walker study we needed to assess both everyday life in the neighbourhood and the impact of these policy changes being driven from central government and changes within local governance.

2. Research in the Walker Neighbourhood

2.1 The Case Study Framework

The first stage of the research was to provide a description of the neighbourhood, drawing on a range of secondary sources. For example in the Walker case 2001 census data was a useful statistical benchmark of life in the neighbourhood. We also spoke to a small number of practitioners to get some background on the neighbourhood, help identify key themes and pathways into the neighbourhood.

In the second stage, interviews were conducted with key informants including residents, professionals and local politicians. This was a scoping and mapping exercise to find out more about everyday life and problems in the neighbourhood. To guide these discussions we used four thematic lenses on life in the neighbourhood – identified as significant from the previous research. These were: public space; safety and security; education (growing up in the neighbourhood) and employment (earning a living). These were explored in terms of how they were experienced and perceived by residents and practitioners. Discussion centred on how residents perceived their neighbourhoods, how they coped with everyday life problems and how far they were engaged in establishing the priorities for the neighbourhood. Interviewees were also asked to reflect on how the neighbourhood is managed, for example how services are delivered or how democratic relationships operate. We also sought to identify the existence of policy and co-ordinated actions to address significant neighbourhood problems identified by our interviewees.

Interviewees also helped to identify two particular groups of people. The first of these we categorised as ‘spiders’ – people (residents and practitioners) who were well-known for their role in building networks of relationships across the neighbourhood. The second group were the most ‘shut-out’ – some of the least integrated people - by definition quite a difficult group to reach. In the Walker study this involved interviewing a sample of young people who had fallen through the education system and a small sample of newly arrived asylum seekers. These were both identified as vulnerable groups of people whose presence in the neighbourhood was the focus of some tensions.

During this stage we interviewed 9 local residents, 8 young local residents, 2 business representatives, 6 spider people and 11 practitioners.

The third and final stage explored more directly the role of governance in tackling neighbourhood problems. In this final stage we investigated in more depth details about how the neighbourhood functions; asking people about their personal assessments of neighbourhood governance structures and processes. We were particularly interested at this stage in finding out more about the role of new institutions in the neighbourhood, the development and operation of networks and role and position of network builders. We also explored processes of resident and participation, the mobilisation of agencies and the development of collaborative practices as well as the obstacles and barriers which prevent participation, mobilisation and collaboration. In addition residents were asked to reflect on how governance arrangements could be developed to promote more inclusive neighbourhoods characterised by better social and physical environments. We further explored issues raised by our interviewees and tracked recent changes in a rapidly shifting neighbourhood context.

During this final stage we interviewed representatives from local youth organisations (4), the local churches (3), community development workers (3), community officer and manager (2), local developer (1), community members and representatives (3).

2.2 A Neighbourhood in Decline: the impact of structural changes

Walker is located a couple of miles east of Newcastle city centre and is bounded to the south by the river Tyne. Its history is inextricably bound up with the fortunes of the ship-building

industries of the Tyne (Appendix 1). Though in close proximity to the city centre, there is a general perception that the neighbourhood is somewhat isolated. It is one of the smallest of the 26 wards in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne¹ with a population size of 7,700 residing in 3,900 households (2001) representing 3% of the population of the city.

Walker has long held a reputation as being a respectable working class area. Previous studies (Madanipour and Bevan 1999, Merridew 1999) have highlighted the continuing sense of community and identity which seems to prevail supported by strong social networks, based for example on kinship ties and strong faith-based communities. The white working class history of the area is reflected in the lack of ethnic diversity in the ward - 97% of the population is white and 97% were born in the UK, whilst some 2% of the population are South Asian (2001 census data). This outward sense of homogeneity is also reflected in a perception of Walker as being quite insular - very few people move into the ward from outside the City, as the 1996 inter-census data shows. However this sense of stability and community has to some extent been eroded through social decline and crime. Moreover, previous research indicates a degree of social diversity and lack of homogeneity amongst residents who themselves perceive their neighbourhood not as a single place - but rather a diverse place with 'good' and 'bad' streets (Madanipour and Bevan 1999).

Newcastle (population c. quarter of a million) was once one of the 'workshops of the world' but has long been a paradigm of deindustrialisation and economic and population decline (Cameron 2003). Industrial restructuring has had a profound affect on the area and a large proportion of the workforce is suffering from the difficult and painful transition. As it is not equipped with the necessary skills and has limited access to new opportunities, the population of the area is under severe pressure. Many have left the area in search of jobs elsewhere, or have stayed and relied on social protection schemes. It is generally claimed that a lack of skills and limited access to new opportunities are fundamental problems for the neighbourhood. Both males and females in Walker exhibit above average levels of economic inactivity. The census data for 2001 shows that just under 19% of the economically active population are unemployed in comparison to a city average of just 8%. Almost a quarter (24.2%), of the economically active males (age 16-74), are unemployed and unemployment has been particularly high amongst 16-24 year old males. An above average proportion of residents are employed in semi-routine and routine occupations. Moreover, there are few job opportunities locally, for example there were 2000 employee jobs in Walker at September 1998, 1 per cent of the Newcastle upon Tyne total. There is a perception amongst residents that there are significant barriers to finding employment.

The area now has acute levels of unmet economic and social need as reflected in the National Indices of Deprivation (DTLR 2000b), which ranks Walker as 30 out of a total of 8414 English wards (where rank 1 is the most deprived ward in England). In Walker, therefore, the risk and incidence of social exclusion is high. Whilst this method may produce a one-dimensional image of the neighbourhood, it is one tool through which policy-makers attempt to lever more money into the area. It is notable that both residents and practitioners have found this portrayal as unhelpful and not particularly reflective of everyday life in Walker.

Health is a key issue in Walker. There are very high levels of long term illness for both male and female residents. The 2001 census data shows that 31% of the population have a long-term limiting illness. Another 18% rated their health as poor over the previous 12 months.

The housing stock, comprising some 3,900 dwellings was mainly built in the 1920s and 1930s in the Garden City style with some 1960s houses and multi-storey blocks, the majority of which is owned by the local authority. Amongst all the Newcastle wards, Walker has the highest level of council rented households at 73% compared with 32% for the city as a whole,

¹ There are currently 26 ward committees although boundary changes will reduce this number in June 2004.

and other tenure types are below average (2001 census). Whilst council housing is only one interface between local residents and the city council, its predominance gives governance relations in the locality a particular flavour.

Previous research has highlighted the lack of access to quality shopping facilities as an issue of importance to local residents. There are limited services within the neighbourhood itself and public transport is limited on some routes and at certain times.

Despite the multi-dimensional nature of problems in the neighbourhood a Residents Survey conducted by the City Council in 1998 showed Walker respondents were satisfied with the way Newcastle City Council is delivering services. Respondents' assessment of council services was overall positive. Education services were seen very positively and 1 in 4 respondents felt that their neighbourhood as a place to live was improving (although 34% felt it was getting worse). Whilst 70% of respondents were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live, crime and nuisance were still key issues with the following being highlighted by a significant proportion of residents as being a 'serious problem':

Serious problems in the neighbourhood	% of respondents
<i>Burglary</i>	49%
<i>Car theft</i>	40%
<i>Vandalism to buildings</i>	48%
<i>Vandalism to cars</i>	41%
<i>Joyriding</i>	39%
<i>Graffiti</i>	29%
<i>Fear of personal attack outdoors</i>	28%
<i>Disruptive/ threatening children or youths</i>	24%
<i>Noisy children</i>	27%
<i>General noise</i>	23%
<i>Neighbour problems</i>	16%

Figure 1 Results of Residents Survey Identifying Problems in the Neighbourhood

(Source: www.newcastle.gov.uk/pr.nsf/a/WalkerResSurv98)

A range of neighbourhood environment problems were identified as 'serious' by a significant number of respondents including: litter, dog mess, stray dogs, over-grown shrubs, lack of safe play areas for children and traffic danger and pollution. In terms of neglect of the built environment, serious problems were perceived to be neglected and run-down properties, vacant properties and the condition of roads and pavements.

2.3 A neighbourhood in transition: current programmes and activities

In response, at part in least to these structural changes, a raft of policy measures locally and nationally driven are emerging within the neighbourhood, leading to a sense of neighbourhood as a site of transformation. There is now a new policy dynamic operating in the neighbourhood which has historically been lacking given the tendency to focus regeneration programmes and resources into the West End of the City. A range of actors are involved in neighbourhood activities and the area is notable for the strength of the community and voluntary sector. However there is a general absence of private sector players involved in local policy processes and governance of the neighbourhood continues to be dominated by the city council.

A Modernised City Council

The city council in its various guises remains a key player in driving local policy agendas and in the operation of governance mechanisms – including service provision and political forums. During the period of the research there has been a re-organisation of the city council of structure and a re-shaping of the directorates (see Appendix 6) however for the most-part the

main inter-face between the residents and the city council has been the Community and Housing directorate (see Appendix 7). Organisational restructuring in 2000 led to the housing management service being brought together with community development, youth service and play service (these latter two subsequently being amalgamated into Play and Youth Services).

Newcastle City Council has adopted a new cabinet style of political management in response to the Government's White Paper *Local Leadership, Local Choice* (1999) and Local Government Bill. The new framework for the City implemented in October 1999 and revised in 2001 sought to establish more meaningful engagement with local communities and make the City Council more accountable through 7 area committees and 26 local ward committees.

The *area committees* (which are formal sub-committees of the Cabinet) are designed to integrate the work of the Council and interests of the residents and are made up of councillors, officers and community representatives from each of the wards. The area committees now provide a focus for strategic community planning and have a budget for participation. Each area committee brings together a number of ward level forums -*local ward committees*-, which provide local groups with access to governance processes. They aim to be open, inclusive, transparent and accountable. The Walker ward is part of the Outer East Area Committee, along with Byker, Walkergate and Monkchester wards (Appendix 2 & 3).

The 2000 Residents Survey (Newcastle City Council 2000) – showed that there were no real differences between the Outer East and City as a whole in relation to views on democratic issues or matters concerning contact and communication with the council. For example, 43% of those interviewed in the Outer East felt that Newcastle City Council consults the people of Newcastle 'not very well', and 44% felt that the City Council did not provide enough opportunities to influence its policies and services. 41% disagreed that the City Council takes account of the views of people living in Newcastle. However a high proportion of people could name a local councillor and knew how to get in touch with them.

A strong attachment to local councillors and a reputation for a culture of engagement in local politics does not however translate into local people identifying strongly with informal or formal governance processes. Levels of engagement in formal local politics have been quite low (16.9% election turnout in May 1998), although the recent postal by-election in Walker had a 47% turnout. Nonetheless, past research has shown that some people feel excluded from formal political processes. This may be compounded by a sense that Walker people are suspicious of people who become activists or voluntary workers, even though there are strong and well-established voluntary networks in the neighbourhood.

The Newcastle Plan

Under the Local Government Act 2000 the council has a duty to produce a community strategy to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the city by pulling services together and improving them. The City-wide Local Strategic Partnership is responsible for developing this Community Strategy and in Newcastle this has been pulled together with the Local Neighbourhood Renewal strategy to form the Newcastle Plan (draft early 2004).

East End Partnership

One of the major institutional structures supporting local regeneration in Walker has been the East End Partnership. This successfully bid for SRB Challenge Fund money (£25 million) for a period of seven years (1996-2003). The partnership covers all the wards of Byker, Monkchester and Walker and parts of Walkergate and Heaton. The partnership comprises 10 City Councillors, 10 private sector representatives and 10 representatives from the voluntary/community sector and public services. The partnership has six key objectives: the revitalisation of Shields Road as a commercial centre, increase education, employment and training opportunities, provide community support for special needs, increase safety, improve the environment and housing estates and enhance sport and leisure opportunities and quality of life in the East End. Initially the partnership did not have strong links with the local community - compounded by workers being located in the central offices of the City Council. However the resource centre on Shields Road in Byker has provided a local contact point.

Health Initiatives

The *Newcastle Health Partnership* is implementing the Tyne and Wear Health Action Zone (HAZ), which seeks to promote social inclusion by focusing on traditionally excluded communities in deprived areas of the city. The programmes seek to maximise income and tackle poverty amongst the targeted groups and improve involvement by such groups in service planning and design. The locally designated Areas for Special Action includes the East End of Newcastle.

HealthWorks East is a community led approach to health development in the East End. The project supports community groups and voluntary organisations to develop healthy living activities.

Sure Start East initiative is part of a national government programme targeting the under four year olds and their families. The programme works in a holistic way to provide early education, childcare, health and family support. Social, emotional and practical support is offered by a team of professionals to people in their homes and in local centres. The Newcastle East Sure Start programme offers services to over one thousand children and their families from parts of Byker, Monkchester and Walker wards.

Community and Voluntary Initiatives

There is a diverse and vibrant community and voluntary sector infrastructure – providing services on both a formal and informal basis.

Housing

Housing is the focus for a number of important changes within the neighbourhood. The high percentage of housing stock owned by the city council is problematic for a number of reasons. In recent times the socially rented sector in the UK has been branded as a tenure of last resort as demand has fallen and there has been a lack of resources to invest in the existing stock. When in 2000 central government introduced a new measure of decent homes, 79% of the city council stock failed to meet this benchmark. Hence a new impetus has emerged around the concept of 'decent homes'. The cost of repairing the stock was estimated to be about £1.6 billion over 16 years with much of this required in the first five years. In 2002 the recommendation from the council was to launch an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) allowing the council to bid to central government for the extra money required to upgrade the stock. The City Council bid to ODPM for ALMO status in May 2003 and received confirmation that it would be eligible for £64 million over two years to upgrade the 34,000 council homes, subject to the approval of their tenants. A new period of consultation began with residents in September 2003 with some aspects being more successful than others; as one officer noted the response to the ALMO road-show was 'overwhelming apathy'. Your Homes Newcastle was officially launched in April 2004.

NewcastleGateshead Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder is one of nine pathfinders across the country in a 15 year programme launched by ODPM to tackle problems caused by housing market collapse. The HMR Pathfinder programme is part of the Sustainable Communities Plan actions (Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, February 2003) – a long term action plan for delivering thriving communities with decent homes and good quality environments. In February 2004 the pathfinder was awarded £69 million to carry out the work across parts of 14 wards in Newcastle and 10 in Gateshead. It has not been within the scope of the research to look in detail at the NewcastleGateshead HMR pathfinder which was in the early stages of development during the study period. However, the east end of Newcastle is a focus action and the Pathfinder has begun work on Walker Riverside in partnership with the city council linking with the Going for Growth strategy. Here the focus is on site assembly, quality new build and improvements to community safety and crime reduction.

A key area of transition in neighbourhood services and relationships is therefore around housing. The shift to the ALMO arrangements, the HMR Pathfinder and Going for Growth all have a core concern with changing the mix and quality of local housing. This marks an important shift from the monolithic relationship which has existed between the local community and local authority housing.

2.4 Going for Growth: An Urban Renaissance Agenda

Newcastle City Council has responded to the problems of economic restructuring through its Going for Growth strategy announced in July 1999. This strategy seeks to respond to the problems of long-term industrial and population decline through a pro-active strategy of growth. The city overall has seen a steady out-migration of people – a decline in population which is projected to continue from 275,000 in 2000 to 255,000 in 2020. The falling population has meant associated problems of increasingly expensive services, a surplus of school places and a growing number of empty houses. The aim of Going for Growth is to stem the process of decline and stimulate a new momentum of growth.

Although deemed to be a city-wide strategy, Going for Growth has had an early emphasis on the Riverside wards in both the east and west of the city which display some of the most acute burdens of social exclusion. For example, Scotswood in the west end has experienced acute population decline at 43% - with an estimated four families leaving the area every week. In Walker the decline has been at the rate of 35% (Newcastle City Council 2000:4).

One of the perceived problems in Walker identified by both practitioners and residents in the study was that if young people do well, get a decent job and want to buy their own home then they will in all likelihood relocate outside of Walker – and often into the neighbouring borough of North Tyneside. This reflects both the lack of housing opportunities locally and a sense that there are better places to live.

When the City Council published its Going for Growth Green Paper in January 2000 setting out the rationale for the strategy it announced:

Our approach needs to be radical, we must accept that in some areas the urban structure is broken and cannot be mended. An increasing number of inner city residents have no jobs and many of those with Newcastle jobs choose to live outside the city. Evidence shows that we need a strategic city-wide approach to solve the problems of population decline and the growing gulf between some of our communities (2000: 1)

The emergent strategy extends over a twenty year period and aims to create a 'competitive, cohesive and cosmopolitan regional capital of international significance' (2000:3). The intention is that policy measures should infiltrate even those areas of the city which appear to be in terminal decline, upgrade local infrastructure including environment, schools, transport, leisure, health and community. By setting out a set of strategic principles the City Council believes it has provided a framework for directing and managing change (rather than producing blueprints) and for co-ordinated decision-making.

Going for Growth draft master plans were first published in June 2000 and a city-wide process of consultation followed. Regeneration plans produced in 2001 set a policy framework for future regeneration proposals and decisions implemented through new and existing partnerships. Through the development of inclusive, participatory processes the City Council is seeking to create more cohesive communities - successful neighbourhoods, which are attractive places to live and work. The strategy hinges upon being able to attract a new more socially diverse population through increased housing choice and access to an increasing number and variety of jobs. A central concept within the strategy is the establishment or strengthening of neighbourhood centres or hubs, which provide a focus for community and neighbourhood activities including: quality local shopping, recreation, public transport provision, primary education and life long learning. This is to be supported by effective management of local services at neighbourhood level through excellence in 'urban housekeeping' (neighbourhood management) and investment in social and community networks.

Going for Growth in the East End

Whilst major regeneration has been underway in recent years, for example through the East End Partnership, the intention behind Going for Growth was to look at the East End as a

whole, rather than in a piecemeal way. The following themes are highlighted as district wide aims and principles:

- *Valuing and promoting diverse residential environments* - encouraging mixed use development and a vibrant and sustainable housing stock, breaking the 'monoculture' of local authority housing through tenure diversification and new build (approximately 5,200-5,900 new homes across the East End). The strategy also aims to strengthen existing popular housing areas and clear unwanted housing, allowing families to 'grow in the East End'.
- *Expand and diversify the local economy* - revitalising the old industrial areas creating a potential 4,200 new jobs and securing jobs for local people through employment pacts and providing targeted training and skill development especially in new technology.
- *Develop the community infrastructure* - enabling access to a wide range of facilities and resources such as retail, health, education and community facilities at both a district and neighbourhood level. This involves strengthening the district heart by improving the declining retail, community and leisure facilities at Shields Road in Byker and creating stronger, integrated neighbourhood centres (neighbourhood hubs). The neighbourhood centres – not necessarily new build - are the focus for neighbourhood facilities, service provision and community networks.
- *Healthy communities* – the provision of shops, health, childcare services, community provision, opportunities for recreation and sporting activity, green spaces, recreation areas, schools and community safety will all contribute to the goal of creating healthier communities. The plan will also aim to ensure ease of access to health services in Byker, Walkergate and Walker, which are currently poorly served and there will be new primary care options, for example, for mental health and the elderly. There will also be investment in schools and a focus on crime reduction strategies.
- *Environment* – improve open and green space, reduce opportunities for crime, enhance existing parks and promote new ones and develop the historic environment.
- *Improve accessibility* - through improved transport corridors and access to a range of public transport systems for some inaccessible areas with little public transport.

The strategy emphasises the importance of community involvement and the needs of young people. Work has been undertaken with East End residents since 2000 to evolve a partnership model. This has involved the creation of the East End Community and Voluntary Sector Forum drawing together established community and voluntary organisations working in the East End. This aims to provide a means for local organisations to play an active role in regeneration processes, increase resident participation and develop partnership and participation strategies.

Neighbourhood Action Plans

More detailed ideas about urban renaissance are contained within the 5 neighbourhood action plans drawn up by the city council in 2001. The Walker ward encompasses parts of three of these Neighbourhood Action Plans: St Anthony's and Walker/Walkergate and Walker Riverside.

- *St Anthony's*

The St Anthony's estate is mainly comprised of the 1920s and 1930s garden-city style, local authority housing. There are areas of popular housing and key issues are future demand and investment needs and access to the provision of local services and shopping facilities. Actions are to include reviewing the role of Welbeck Road as a neighbourhood centre and transport route, and looking at the quality and use of existing open space. There is also a

commitment to addressing health priorities including teenage pregnancy, mental ill health, long-term and limiting illness and the elderly.

- *Walker and Walkergate*

This area represents a mix of 1920s/30s, garden city style, local authority housing with stable private housing and opportunities for new, more diverse housing. There are plans for selective demolition of unpopular streets with large numbers of void properties. In addition it is proposed to strengthen and improve the local neighbourhood centres and shopping – for example by improving existing local shopping facilities on Welbeck Road and linking library, health services and shopping. It is also hoped to strengthen the existing contribution of Walker secondary school to adult learning and youth training initiatives. There is also a focus on optimising the use of local open space, improving playing pitches, open spaces and allotment provision. Plans include introducing Home Zones with 20mph speed limits and cycling and pedestrian priority measures to enhance residential environments and improve access to parks and open spaces.

- *Walker Riverside*

Our study has concerned itself primarily with Walker Riverside where most of the current attention is focussed. The riverside is a key focus for regeneration efforts being one of the City's priority Strategic Economic Development sites. The original plans for Walker Riverside seek to develop a new and distinctive identity through a mixed use urban environment. The plan outlines the potential for 3,600 new high and medium density housing units, which will take the form of a new urban village, supporting a new neighbourhood centre and new school. There will also be new training and job opportunities for local residents with a target of 1,500 new jobs (in marine and off-shore industries).

Actions include establishing a long term partnership with a life span of a minimum of 10 years, the Walker Riverside Regeneration Partnership to support the development process. The Walker Riverside Community Network is a new organisation created in 2001 as a means of enhancing community participation in the regeneration of the riverside and consolidating the achievement of existing groups and organisations and actively developing new tenants and residents groups. There are about 8 groups in the network and more in the early stages of development. A core aim is to involve young people and those who do not normally take part in residents groups.

Some residents have become highly active around the Going for Growth process through their local residents associations and through the umbrella organisation the Walker and Riverside Community and Voluntary Network. However amongst others there is apathy – and a significant number of residents, especially young people, interviewed for the project were unaware of Going for Growth. Although there has been a lot of publicity about the changes there has been to date little in the way of tangible changes – the notable exception being a limited amount of demolition of local authority stock.

In 2001 Newcastle City Council sought a developer partner to bring about the renaissance process in the East End of the city, a core focus was to be on the Walker Riverside but this was to tie into other changes in the neighbourhood. The Press releases declared that 50 developers across Europe had expressed an interest in the £300 million regeneration of Walker Riverside described as:

'...one of the best 150 acre development sites in the country... riverside frontage just 10 minutes from the city make it one of the best urban development sites in the country'.
(Newcastle City Council June 2001)

In the event seven submissions were considered and following legal scrutiny, three consortia were left in the process. One of these was Places for People, the development arm of North British Housing and two consortia of big name house-builders, the first comprising Wimpey, Bellway and Persimmon and the second Barrett, Haslam and Miller Homes NE. It seemed

from the outset that private house-builders might well be the preferred development partner. However concurrent community development processes in Walker had yielded a new community forum – The Walker Riverside Community and Voluntary Network, who as part of the Walker Riverside Advisory Group were to have a major influence over the selection of the developer. Along with councillors, representatives from the Walker and Riverside Community Network, and East End Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, recommended to the Cabinet the appointment of the Places for People consortium to regenerate the area (Citylife, April 2002:3). The consortium, which is a social landlord specialising in community regeneration won a £300 million contract to develop 61 ha of the Walker Riverside district into mixed used urban environment including 3,600 new home, shops, open spaces and a school. The first stage of work was to develop a master-plan for the area, which would guide its development in the next 20 years.

Despite emphasising the need for holistic changes one of the key reference points of the Going for Growth strategy is the housing stock within the city. In Walker the Going for Growth process seems to have largely centred and floundered on the emotive issue of housing.

2.5 Summary

The above has attempted to highlight in general terms the context of the study and some of the broad changes which are underway in the neighbourhood. Overall it has portrayed an area characterised by it's stability as undergoing major change with complex new governance arrangements driven by central and local government agendas, creating multi-directional change. Whilst it is not our role to speculate on the likely changes – at the time of the research it is important to note that existing neighbourhood governance structures were in a state of flux, even relatively new changes like the Area Committees were being reviewed. Amongst the array of changes it has however been the overarching story of Going for Growth which dominate practitioners and residents perspectives on neighbourhood. The issue of housing is clearly emotive – having a safe, secure and comfortable home is a necessity for most people. The Going for Growth strategy has therefore not just been perceived as an opportunity but also as a threat. Resident protests have occurred in a variety of forms in both the east and west end of the city with the threat of demolition and concerns about **gentrification**. Whilst the study is specifically focussed on localised mobilisations within the Walker neighbourhood it is worth noting that there has also been a city-wide campaign called 'Whose City' which has in part questioned the rationale behind Going for Growth and its focus on competing in global markets and 'trickle down' benefits (Whose City 2003).

3. Perceptions of the Neighbourhood

3.1 An Overview

The general perceptions of the residents about their neighbourhood and the local authority are now being actively reshaped by the introduction of the Going for Growth strategy, which in its original guise envisages radical redevelopment of parts of the neighbourhood. To the traditional problems of crime and unemployment, a sense of precariousness about the future has been added, while at the same time a new dynamism among some of the residents and practitioners has emerged. The strategy which touches and influences almost all aspects of life in the neighbourhood, has been a catalyst for changing the way that some people are thinking and talking about the neighbourhood – permeating and shaping the themes of safety and security, public spaces, schools and education, youth and employment and unemployment. However, whilst Going for Growth is currently an overarching story of the neighbourhood the sense of change should not be over-stated, some residents had not heard of Going for Growth and others had only a sketchy idea of what might be involved. This was the case for some practitioners too, especially those managing intensive projects in the neighbourhood and not directly involved with broader redevelopment processes.

Sense of community

Walker has been characterised as a traditional working class neighbourhood. In common with expressions of community elsewhere, one aspect of this is the impression of a somewhat closed world, with an insular and parochial feel. Whilst this might be expressed as a suspicion of outsiders, another aspect can be seen as strong social networks and kinship ties. For many residents, Walker, good and bad, was their home; therefore they would simply like to see improvements. But this didn't make Walker a bad neighbourhood in which to live. For a number of people their whole lives had been lived in Walker and some still lived in the houses where they were born. The underpinning of the neighbourhood was the ship-building industries of the Tyne. Hence, amongst those who experienced it and remember it, there is a legacy of pride in the strong working class traditions bound up with skilled work in the yards. This was the case even though as a labour force their work was always precarious and involved moving between yards to chase available work.

Against outside threats / community mobilising

This sense of community is based on the solidarity that developed as a result of working and living together for a long time. It is well-recognised that the neighbourhood has a substantial breadth and depth of community and voluntary activity – even if this is operating in a 'behind the scenes' way. Some of these social networks have now been mobilized against the threat of redevelopment posed by the introduction of the Going for Growth strategy. There has been a flourishing of resident groups and activism in the area, partly as a reaction to the initial lack of community participation around the new regeneration strategy. This has exacerbated a tendency amongst some neighbourhood residents to mistrust 'outsiders' and authority. At the same time, it has generated energy in mobilizing groups and activities to deal with the major problems of housing and neighbourhood renewal – rekindling a sense of collective identity. The immediate concern of many interviewees was their own home and family

My main concern is the houses – I was born upstairs here. This is the only place I know (Spider).

However, this was balanced by a fierce sense of loyalty to community and a sense that through community mobilisation, local people have not only managed to protect community but have also enhanced it:

At the end of the day we all want to help each other – but at the end of the day our estate, our residents and families come first. We've all got families on here.... I'm not just with me, wor lass and me daughter- my daughter and her boyfriend lives on here –it's a family community. Everyone gets on – proved it at the Jubilee Party –apart from the one we had bother with – she said it was too noisy (Spider)

We've made the estate what it is. We look after each other down here – always here for everybody on the estate. If you want 'owt doing...No-one's ever stuck for something – if someone can give you what you need or help you (Spider).

Sense of maltreatment

Despite this sense of community cohesion and a desire to protect their own homes, there is also a sense in which residents feel as though they had been abandoned to their fate. Not only has there been a loss of livelihood and a way of life which went with it, but there is also a perception that the Council have allowed their homes and the quality of their physical environment to be run-down. Hence, although a strong sense of dependency on the council has been identified by some, this is matched by a sense of being let down or 'left to rot'. The quality of the housing was seen as a major problem by residents of the neighbourhood. In terms of negative perceptions of the neighbourhood, people felt more could be done to improve the quality of the houses. This has been brought forward in the debates about the future of the council housing stock.

Ongoing delays in signing of the Going for Growth contract and implementation have caused further concerns. Although this has been a key issue for those involved – creating some uncertainty and a sense of fatigue - it is a moot point as to how many people beyond the residents groups feel that it has much to do with them.

Crime and anti-social behaviour

One of the main themes of concern among the residents is that of young people, crime and anti-social behaviour, which leave them feeling vulnerable and, at times, suffering from the effects of vandalism and bad behaviour.

You wouldn't believe me but we once had a horse resident down here. Living in the house – the council told them they had to shift it off the grass so they moved it into the house. They put it in the back garden during the day and every time the council came down they used to drag it into the house and they wouldn't answer the door (Spider).

Another resident commented that it was anti-social behaviour which had galvanised them into forming a local residents group:

...we did have some trouble with anti-social people in the area....and we decided that it was best that many voices were heard rather than one (Spider).

This, as well as drug abuse, has been a long standing concern in the area and many other issues are closely related to this issue. Organized crime is a strand of activity in the area that rarely gets mentioned, and does not appear to have a visible impact on the life of residents.

It has not been, however, easy to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour. There remains a mistrust of outsiders, a suspicion of being seen to talk to people – whether the police or researchers. Fear and intimidation have been mentioned and residents' reporting anti-social behaviour have been rewarded by having a brick through their window. Moreover, where there has been concerted action by other tenants to collate enough evidence for a court case this has often not resulted in a successful prosecution. A recent, high-profile drugs raid in the neighbourhood was seen as commendable, but there was concern that there did not appear to have been much follow up from that event.

Services

Services remain one of the key issues. The services that are normally provided in other areas by the private sector providers, such as supermarkets, banks and garages are not found here. What exists is expensive and limited shopping, poorly served by public transport. A number of the smaller bus routes have been cut over the past year, exacerbating travel problems within and across the East End of the city.

A sense of dependence

For officials working in the area, there was a mixed range of attitudes to both the place and the people of Walker. Some officers working in Walker felt frustration that local people were unwilling to help themselves and were difficult to work with. This was, however, expressed by some and not all of the intermediary people we spoke to. The sense of practitioners' frustration with local people was also reflected in the feelings of some of the activists / volunteers who were frustrated that they were maybe wasting their time trying to bring about community improvements – investing when other people don't seem to care. However whilst people were accused of not wanting to help themselves, amongst those who are trying to do just that there was a sense that they were made to feel like they were over-stepping the mark and were being penalised for being concerned about their neighbourhood.

Image and stigma

Whilst many of the residents were at home in Walker, there was a perception that the neighbourhood had a bad reputation amongst outsiders. Some interviewees were frustrated by the way that that recent press coverage in the local media had done the image of the area even more harm by stigmatising it further.

Some residents felt angry about the way that central government deprivation statistics had been used in local press coverage, creating a negative feel about the area amongst outsiders and adding to the perception that Walker was a bad place to live. One interviewee in the final year of a degree at one of the city's universities remarked how other students expressed surprise that someone from Walker would be at the university:

...some of the people are like how come you're here if you're from Walker. I'm like why shouldn't I be here? But people think its strange (Resident).

As always, such categorisation, which has labelled the neighbourhood as amongst the poorest in the country, was helpful for the officials and those responsible in public services. Particularly in the education sector, this data and categorisation was being used to emphasise the need for greater levels of funding. However, stigma works against the efforts of those who seek to do something to improve the neighbourhood conditions.

Going for Growth – one of the (failed) consortiums bids – talked about normal housing for normal people – what do they think I am like? One of the developers turned round and said what we're trying to do on the riverside is build proper houses for proper people. That didn't gan down very well with me. Proper people – what do you think I'm made of? Plastic? We are proper people - it's us who've kept these council homes up to standard for the past 60-70 year (Spider).

Most of the residents felt that their neighbourhood was a good place to live in. The idea of describing the neighbourhood was difficult to communicate with some of the interviewees who felt that Walker was 'alright' or simply 'home'. The neighbourhood was not seen as being distinctly different to other places – but at the same time phrases like 'Beirut' and 'little Bosnia' were sometimes used to describe how some streets in the ward can be like to live in and around. In general it was some of the younger residents who expressed more negative feelings about the neighbourhood. One young resident said she couldn't think of any good things to say about the estate to someone who hadn't been there before, rather she said:

It's just a dump, it's a horrible area, you hear lots of bad things about it – it's just a crap place, everyone says the kids are rogues (Young resident).

A heterogeneous world

As previous research has shown, it is very difficult to treat the neighbourhood as a homogenous entity. Our neighbourhood case study area was defined as the Walker ward, which was useful in terms of following on from the previous rounds of the research on social exclusion and in providing statistical data. However, although the Walker community is seen to be associated with a specific geographical area, this would also include parts of the surrounding wards of Monkchester and Walkergate. More often people felt a sense of attachment to their parts of Walker – such as the street or estate on which they lived.

I've just lived at this end of Walker – I couldn't tell you about the rest (Resident).

From a historical perspective alternative ideas about life in the neighbourhood are revealed. The East End Community and Voluntary Sector Forum has collated a time-line perspective on the East End, recording the comments of local residents. This commemoration includes for example: the closure of the pits in the 1930s; the smell of toffee when the sugar factory was bombed during the war and the bombing of the naval yard; the immigration into the area of Hungarians and Czechs in the 1950s; the building of the new housing estates; the decline of ship-building; the closure of the local cinemas and the formation of new local groups such as the East End Parent and Toddler Forum in 1990.

Mixed Perceptions of Neighbourhood

Homogenous and insular community.....diversity / tradition of migrant workers

Stable / respectable community.....crime & anti-social behaviour

White working class.....new immigrants

Dependence / support for city council.....sense of abandonment/ threat

Culture of political engagement.....lack of formal engagement /
average election turnout

Fig 2 Summary of Perceptions of Neighbourhood

3.2 Living in the neighbourhood

In the research four main themes are selected to explore in more detail: safety and security, public spaces, schools and education, employment and unemployment – all of which are issues of concern in Walker. However, before beginning a discussion of these, we should re-emphasize the significance of the city's overall renewal strategy, **Going for Growth**. As highlighted this forms an overarching story, which touches on and influences almost all aspects of life in the neighbourhood. It has been an important catalyst for change, and is likely to permeate and shape different dimensions of everyday life in the neighbourhood.

Whilst in physical terms there has been some demolition of mainly empty housing, so far the process has mainly been at the consultation stage. The contractors – Places for People – are consulting with local people to create a new master plan for the riverside area. So far they have adopted a thematic approach to the process of developing a framework plan looking at the issues of green space, housing and a new neighbourhood centre. Initially it was proposed that efforts be focussed on **4 geographical areas**: Walker Rd/ St Anthonys (possible site of new neighbourhood centre), Riverside, St Anthony's West, and Churchwalk (the existing shopping centre). The consultation exercises seek to engage with many of the questions surrounding everyday life in the neighbourhood and about possible future scenarios for Walker.

In addition to this ongoing story of Going for Growth, there is the recurrent theme of **youth** which also cuts across the themes of safety and security, public space, and growing up. There was a strong association between youth, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and alcohol consumption in people's perceptions of problems in the neighbourhood. The theme of youth or 'roving youth' as a core problem was raised across the spectrum of interviewees: sometimes expressing the view that youth were the cause of problems or sometimes that

agencies were failing to respond to the needs of the youth. Often it was felt that there was little for young people to do and their participatory role in and around regeneration processes had been minimal. Hence, the theme of youth, interwoven through these dimensions of everyday life in the neighbourhood could also be seen as core to the Going for Growth vision and the future of the neighbourhood. In response to the importance of the youth issue we have deliberately targeted a group of young residents for inclusion in our survey of residents. This has focussed particularly on a group who are seen as being in danger of falling through the system.

Some other issues which might seem important in everyday life were rarely commented upon. One example of this is health, which is a statistically a key problem in the neighbourhood. Even people who were unable to work due to health-related problems rarely referred to health issues. Poor health is a key issue, but perhaps like unemployment it was seen as so much part of everyday life that it didn't warrant many comments. An overarching theme which has come to the fore is how the neighbourhood is governed. Amongst activists there is a sense that the political process is remote from the needs and interests of the neighbourhood, whilst paradoxically community mobilising has increased the confidence of residents to try to make demands of the authorities.

Part II: Living in the Neighbourhood

4. Safety and Security

4.1 Residents' Perceptions

A sense of vulnerability

There were mixed feelings about safety and security in and around the neighbourhood. Amongst many of the residents interviewed there was a shared perception that crime was a problem in the neighbourhood and many reported a fear of crime and of recrimination and intimidation. However, at the same time respondents reported feeling safe in their own homes and streets, although some people felt there were parts of Walker which were unsafe. There was a significant number of respondents who felt that although crime and anti-social behaviour might be problems on the estate, they personally felt safe both in their homes and in going about the estate.

The dominant concern was with anti-social behaviour; this was often linked to concerns over youth and drug and alcohol consumption and was a re-current theme at residents meetings:

Anti-social behaviour is our main thing at meetings – for all it doesn't come on the estate as much now – we had a lot of it one time. And it's only a few weeks ago ...I got set upon at the top of the estate....walking along the back and.. got a stone bounced off me eye. Just because we set up a neighbourhood watch and we've kept the vandals off and the anti-social element off the estate (Spider).

However, the problems of safety and security are not distributed evenly in the neighbourhood, as reflected in our previous research. Different areas of the neighbourhood may have different experiences of safety and security, depending on the particular problems that may occur on one street or the other. These problems are not equally distributed across different age groups either. The youth are seen to be the cause of most problems of crime and anti-social behaviour, with the elderly feeling the most vulnerable. However young people also felt that they were vulnerable from other young people (see below).

The problems of crime and anti-social behaviour also vary with time of the week and year.

Bank holidays down here was serious. The bars were open all day then and they were fighting from when they walked out of the door till when they got to the house and then the drinking would start some more – parties would start and there would be more and more fights and then the football would come out – till 1am and then there would be more fights – that's all there was. This year the last bank holiday was the quietest one for a long time. There wasn't even a police car – whereas before you would have riot vans racing down here (Spider).

For people living in the area, there was also a perception that drugs were a problem in the neighbourhood. Often they did not distinguish between different types of drugs – merely stressing that there was a drug problem linked with anti-social behaviour – including dealing on the streets and living near dealers who have taxis turning up at all times of the night. Also some felt that the open smoking of cannabis was anti-social and found it intimidating. Some people were angry that drugs – whatever their nature – were not being taken seriously by the authorities.

A further dimension to anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood was that of car-mending.

I've never known an estate have so many car menders (Resident).

Another resident commented:

They did everything but sell oil up the street.

The issue of car-mending seems to be associated with noise, damage to walls and fences and the congregation of young males and outsiders.

4.2 Young Residents' Perceptions

Although a couple of young people felt safe enough wherever they were and whatever time of day or night, others did not go to all parts of the neighbourhood. Two young residents mentioned that they would avoid Pottery Bank (located along the riverside) because it was a 'bit rough' and groups of people tended to hang about. However, like many of the older residents some of the young people thought that things were a lot calmer in the neighbourhood now than they had been in the past:

When I was younger, you might have said it was rough, but I don't think it is now, it's calmed down quite a bit (Young resident).

Another felt that trouble happens sometimes wherever you live and that Walker was no different from anywhere else. Also there was a perception that trouble started when people came in from outside the neighbourhood. Another felt that issues over safety and security on the estate were exaggerated:

It's alright, it's not as bad as people make out, not as rough, but when you say you're from Walker – people react. My street is quiet (Young resident).

Whilst young residents were often seen as the cause of the problems, they themselves had concerns over their own safety and security in the neighbourhood.

You might get in bother if you had a half-decent bike. If you walk past a group of kids and you look funny, you would probably start running or you would end up in a fight. Not everyday, but it can happen (Young resident).

One of the young people who had lived in one of the multi-storey blocks said they felt unsafe living there and had moved out almost immediately. Security in the multi-storeys has since become much more rigorous, with concierge systems and CCTV.

4.3 Local Business Perceptions

One local shop-keeper, running a family business, reported being very frustrated that drug dealers weren't being targeted:

They smoke joints in my shop.. it can put people off coming in if they're hanging around....Then I have to deal with their behaviour, I don't want it in my property and I don't want it next to me. It can be really scary to deal with that kind of situation (Business Owner).

Alcohol was also seen as a problem – although the drugs seem to be increasingly popular due to their lower cost. Walker was seen as a 'rough place' with drinking and fights as part of the weekend routine. Some residents felt that although Walker had always been a rough place and that drinking was part of its culture, there was an important difference between the past and the present in that people are no longer honest and no longer have respect for you and your property.

4.4 Professionals / Practitioner Perceptions

Youth disorder

Youth disorder and anti-social behaviour were the themes mentioned most frequently by the practitioners with regard to safety and security. With regard to youth, there seemed to be a sense that the authorities were unable effectively to deal with youth-related problems:

To an extent it's starting to feel now that the situation is escalating out of control, beyond the police and housing, who aren't able to deal with it. There are large groups of disenfranchised young people who don't relate to anybody at all, who aren't engaged in any of the youth services which are around, who are causing merry mayhem (Professional).

Some of the professionals working with young people were concerned that the tension around youth, was being seen purely as a problem due to the behaviour of young people. One argued that:

There is a perception and fear that young people are up to no good. Young people are not seen as part of the community (Professional).

Thus a tension between the adult and youth population was now seen as having reached quite a critical point.

Young people and drugs

Drug dealing and using drugs were seen as major problems by most of the professional interviewees.

The drug problem is the major problem (Professional).

Others identified drug problems in Walker as:

A massive issue... – the fear it brings out in people – in terms of dealers living in the street, and just the power that person may have as a consequence of what they're doing (Professional).

In contrast to the other professionals, the police did not see this as being a key problem. The recent changes in the police attitude towards cannabis may have had an impact on this view:

Drugs are a concern...but the main drug use is cannabis and they probably go out of their way (to take it). I would say under-age drinking is probably as big a problem, if not bigger (Professional).

Hence **alcohol** seems to be something of a hidden issue, alongside **domestic violence** which was mentioned by one of the practitioners. Whilst not high profile, work on domestic violence is being done with women in Walker to try to challenge the culture of acceptance which seems to exist.

4.5 Addressing the Problems: Authorities and Professionals

There have been a number of new approaches to tackling safety and security issues in the neighbourhood, both by individual agencies and through co-ordinated efforts. The pressures on the housing officials and the police to deal more effectively with the perpetrators of crime and nuisance have paved the way for more common ground to emerge between the two agencies. Both agencies have undergone change, with the police introducing a new, more integrated system of policing and the housing officials developing a long term strategy to deal with their stock.

The Community and Housing Directorate have relatively recently introduced CCTV and employed concierges and security officers. Whilst the concierge system in the multi-storey blocks of flats is regarded as highly successful, CCTV has been less effective. The control of cameras and the issue of effective surveillance from the cameras that are in operation are

issues of concern, as highlighted by housing officials. For example some cameras were installed on the top of the multi-storey blocks at Churchwalk when the shopping centre was redeveloped. But the cameras are being monitored by Cityworks, which is based elsewhere in the city – rather than by the concierge within the block. Therefore, if an incident occurs, residents have to ring the concierge, who will then ring Cityworks and speak to a camera operator who is unlikely to have enough local knowledge to be able to get a rapid focus on a specific site. Currently negotiations are taking to try to secure more local control:

We are at an early stage of negotiations to get local control, but I'm almost certain it would help (Professional).

CCTV has also been used in an attempt to identify those responsible for graffiti in and around the Churchwalk Shopping Centre with co-operation between the Neighbourhood Housing Office and the Environmental Ward Co-ordinator.

A system of Community Beat Managers has been introduced by the police. Currently the CBM is hosting the Multi-Agency Problem Solving (MAPs) structure, the new co-ordinating body which brings together the different arms of the Community and Housing Directorate of the City Council with the police.

Youth services feel as though their role is not well understood and that they sometimes get the blame for not going in and trying to 'sort out' the young people causing the problems. However, whilst this was sometimes difficult for other agencies and professionals to understand they were clear that this approach would be against their whole ethos, which is that young people must engage on a voluntary basis with them.

4.6 Addressing the Problems: Informal Networks

Through the impetus of Going for Growth, informal networks, particularly the residents associations have begun to play a more important role in tackling issues relating to safety and security.

In two areas where demolition has been proposed, the residents groups have fought back, in turn strengthening their respective communities and solving some of the safety and security problems. For example Hexham Avenue, previously a no-go area, now has a vibrant residents group and by working collectively has gained more control over the street in which they live.

Through negotiations with the council, the community group on The Cambrian feel that partial demolition has allowed them to strengthen the remaining community whilst getting rid of some of the anti-social elements:

I mean now – the kids all run out in the street playing of a night- it's nice to see them all out playing. At one time their parents wouldn't let them out – when we had the anti-social crowd in they were frightened. They were repairing cars at the top of the street – in the front garden repairing them –they were just unruly- they were just anti-social they didn't want to mix. And all the dope heads they were fetching down – it wasn't just the people on the estate – it was the people they were dragging in....

So we agreed to part demolition to try and get rid of them. And it happened. And honest – it's a smashing estate now – we've got one or two dodgy lads – but they're not bad they keep off the estate now. Let's be fair they keep off the estate – they're not bothering us a great lot now (Spider).

Other more direct measures of dealing with crime have included setting up neighbourhood watch schemes, which have been connected with the city-council led community development work and the development of residents associations. The neighbourhood watch scheme has been running since early 2002.

We set up cos we had a lot of empty houses – all the demolished ones – we had a lot of kids coming onto the estate – vandalism. Graffiti, fires, something had to be done – the council weren't interested – the police would come down when they were phoned – but they were saying it was the council's responsibility for the empty houses. And the council were saying it's got nowt to do with us – it's the police's responsibility. So we decided that we would make it our responsibility (Spider).

We've got 100% membership on the estate. We've still got a couple of workey tickets on the estate who've joined the neighbourhood watch – they want everything done for them. But they also cause a lot of bother – two little darlings – the sons. But it's been pretty quiet for the last month or so. We've showed them that we're not going to stand for it. And they're realised now I think (Spider).

We've done it ourselves without any help from the council really apart from the grant. We've never had any councillor sat any of our meetings for two year easy,, Davey Woods came down here once. It's that long ago I've forgotten what it was for (Spider).

The neighbourhood watch scheme has helped with security measures, such as improving locks.

Every house on the estate bar two have all got brand new window locks and door locks and chains put on – through the police- through the neighbourhood watch (Spider).

Stemming from the neighbourhood watch scheme, residents have made attempts to lobby for improved street lighting to improve visibility and reduce the sense of vulnerability at night. Whilst the council are planning to change the street lighting from yellow to white through a 5-10 year city-wide programme, one neighbourhood watch group believe that work will be done on their streets early because they have exerted so much pressure on the authority. Hence exercising a strong and confident community voice is now seen as a way of influencing resource allocation across the city. In addition to this, they are intending to use a £500 grant from the Community Chest to start purchasing individual cameras for the houses so that people are able to see anyone coming up their paths or immediately outside the front of their houses.

Setting up security cameras, as elsewhere in the city and the country, is being seen as a necessary device.

People have asked for that at the neighbourhood watch. We get about 20 people at the meetings – and it was asked and those 20 all said that they wanted that. One was put up on show outside the Anvil – and everyone who came in was videoed – it was all played back and they were really impressed. And feed-back from other people who didn't go to the meeting – have all been turning around and saying when are they going to get them (Spider).

In general, therefore, the problems of safety and security have remained major causes for concern. However, some new measures have been put in place in connection with the community mobilizations that followed the introduction of Going for Growth. Therefore, the threat of radical change and support from outside agencies has helped the community groups to establish new schemes to deal with the problems of crime and anti-social behaviour. At the same time, collaboration between the city council and the concerned residents have led to the demolition schemes which have so far reduced the threats by displacing the undesirable residents.

Whilst theft, burglary and domestic violence take place within the private sphere of the neighbourhood, it is often the problems of safety and security in public places that are making the headlines. One prime example is Walker Park, a key space around which issues of safety and security have been raised.

4.7 Co-ordinated Action

Obviously through neighbourhood watch schemes there is a coming together of the residents' networks with the professional agencies. This provides a basis for joint action. However, there are undoubtedly some very difficult issues around residents policing each other's behaviour and there remains in some places a reluctance to work with the police, even through the community beat officer system.

The multi-agency partnership working (MAPs) approach is seen by professionals as a useful tool for sharing intelligence and providing a more strategic foundation for action. However the nature of the information discussed in these meetings means that it is not appropriate to have any direct involvement. Whilst MAPs is still a relatively new approach, it may take a little time before residents are fully aware of any improvements which arise due to co-ordination at this level.

4.8 Conclusions and Questions

The theme of communities fending for themselves recurs on the question of safety and security. Whilst communities themselves have engaged with these questions both directly and indirectly and with some results, there is still a sense that with some of the problems there is no-one to turn to and that sometimes responsibility seems to fall between agencies. Thus, although communities have been able to make some changes, there is still a sense of frustration with the formal agencies. Many of the residents were reluctant to suggest that it was their own neighbours who caused any problems, often arguing that trouble was caused by outsiders, brought in by people on the street or estate. The new 'softer' style policing embodied in the CBM system may have benefits over the longer term – but the success would seem to hinge on being able to shift cultural attitudes about working with the police, so that a relationship of trust might emerge.

5 Public Space

The public spaces of the neighbourhood are places of tension. One set of tensions arises between the residents and the youth, about who has rights over the public spaces. One of the problems identified by residents is that groups of young people can appropriate public spaces in ways which are intimidating to others. Another set of tensions can be identified between residents and the public authorities who own and manage the space. These revolve around the problems of provision, maintenance, and access, as well as questions of safety and security.

Streets are the major public spaces of the neighbourhood. Walker Road is a major physical dividing line within the neighbourhood, and forms the backbone of a network of streets. Streets are outdoor spaces where a variety of activities take place. Other public spaces within Walker are mainly comprised of green spaces – mainly small patches on housing estates but also two major areas of green space. The large open spaces are **Walker Park**, which is a major park lying to the north-east of the ward and the **Walker Riverside**, a large countryside site which lies to the south of the neighbourhood. Another notable public space is the area of hard-landscaping around the modernized Churchwalk shopping centre. Walker also has a national heritage trail, Hadrian's Trail, going through it en route to Wallsend where the Roman structure of Hadrian's Wall ends². Monkchester playing fields are also an important area of open space – although this lies within the boundaries of the Monkchester Ward.

There are small play areas that have been created by building makeshift fences between houses and the road, to allow children to play, as well as small public spaces including the common areas of the public housing areas and inside the building complexes, such as staircases.

New sports and leisure facilities are portrayed as community facilities, even though they are not free. The closure of more localised facilities has been followed by the opening of a prestigious new complex on Shields Road – East End Pool and Library in front of which there is a new public square with seating. However, the Walker youth are less likely to use these facilities or the nearby Lightfoot Centre. These facilities are very well-used, but often by people travelling in from across different parts of the city to use them. Even though these facilities are located in the East End, they may not be used by the East Enders, due to physical inaccessibility or the cost of using the facilities.

5.1 Residents' Perceptions of Public Spaces

Overall there seemed to be little enthusiasm amongst residents about the public spaces in the neighbourhood. Sometimes this related to a sense that they were inhibited from using the dedicated spaces because they were inaccessible, unattractive or unsafe. And they were restricted from using the more accessible facilities around their homes:

We've got a green up there – it's got a sign on it saying no ball games. I've actually asked and they've said that the children are allowed to play on it, but previous residents asked for it to be erected. We think - myself and the committee – it's pointless having a green there if they don't want children to play on it. There's nowhere for the kids to play around here – you don't want to send them to Walker Park 'cos there's lots of aggravation over there....The other little bit of green has always got dog foul on it (Resident).

For the residents the street spaces and nearby bits of open space were discussed more than the large park areas. These spaces can become extensions of front gardens, where the cars

² However the quality of this heritage site within the neighbourhood has been questioned. As one officer remarked 'people should be issued with a health warning'.

can be repaired. They can also become arenas for collective functions, where community activities took place and were expressed. An example is the Cambrian residents association which organized a Jubilee Street Party.

The whole community want to stay together. We had a street party for the Jubilee and it was unbelievable. They wouldn't gan yem. They were dancing in the streets at 8pm – it cost about £1400 to put on. The kids got mugs... The best part about it was the rain kept off until the bairns had sat down to dinner at their party. We had a bouncy castle – it was fantastic (Spider).

In contrast, gangs of youth can seem to take over streets, which, in turn frightens other residents. Especially on Walker Road, but also on Welbeck Road, the youth congregate outside the shops, which can be intimidating. The younger children can be kept in or maybe wary of these groups.

The kids played in the garden or in the house – you never seen any – you saw them going to school in the morning and coming back from school and that was it. Basically the yobs ran the streets (Spider).

The success of the Hexham Avenue group in getting new community facilities instead of demolition has prompted some other groups to try to secure more community facilities on vacant sites.

When residents talked about public spaces, the main focus of their attention was on the streets and open land in the immediate vicinity of their homes. This contrasted with the professional perspectives which tended to emphasise the role and decline of the dedicated green recreational spaces of the neighbourhood. According to one interviewee,

We've got lamp posts with flower pots on... whilst the houses behind are falling over (Resident).

Policing some areas of the neighbourhood (for example around houses earmarked for demolition) has caused consternation amongst residents, who feel that when these have become trouble spots – for example through the lighting of small fires – that responsibility is passed backwards and forwards between the police and housing.

Despite the general lack of enthusiasm for the green spaces, one resident argued that some of the dedicated spaces perhaps did more work than people realised and so to an extent were taken for granted. She felt that residents tended to undervalue the extent to which they did use, perhaps very informally, some of the public spaces.

Youth in public spaces

The mere presence of young people in public spaces was regarded by some as a nuisance and sometimes intimidating when they congregated on streets and in the parks. There was a sense in which young people seem to have very few rights and that this is expressed particularly over the use of public space. However, there was also a general recognition that there was very little in the way of affordable and accessible facilities to serve young people.

5.2 Young Residents' Perceptions

Young people themselves also shared some of the concerns about the way that youth congregate in public spaces. Some expressed concerns about spending time in public spaces where there was always the potential for trouble. As one young female remarked 'I prefer to stay indoors' and so would either stay at home or make arrangements to go to friends houses. One young male said 'You wouldn't walk past the park on a Friday night' – for fear of getting into trouble with kids who were drunk. Another said it was possible to just carry on walking to avoid bother. One argued that there was nothing in the green spaces to make them go there and use them.

Another, a 17 year old, felt that they were too old to use the parks, and would only use them occasionally to play football. This reflected the view of many of the young men that outdoor spaces were of significance only for kicking a football about. There was a feeling that there could be better facilities for young people but the only two suggestions were for a youth centre and better football pitches. Interestingly, although youth congregating in public spaces is seen as a major problem, none of the young residents interviewed claimed to use public spaces in this way, and were concerned that they might encounter trouble from groups just by moving about the neighbourhood. All were united in feeling that the public spaces of the neighbourhood did not offer them very much.

5.3 Local Business Perceptions

Two local shop-keepers, one on Welbeck Road and one on Walker Road expressed concern that young people hanging about on the pavements was off-putting for their customers and that they themselves found it intimidating. Neither felt that the authorities were willing to take any action to improve the situation. They were especially concerned about young people under the influence of drink or drugs.

5.4 Professional / Practitioner Perceptions

Decline of public spaces

Practitioners were concerned with how to maintain quality public spaces and there was overall a perception of decline and a need to reinvigorate public spaces. One aspect of this was the need to curb vandalism and graffiti across the neighbourhood. However concern was also expressed by some practitioners over the decline of the major green spaces of Walker Park and Walker Riverside.

Both the Riverside and Walker Park appear to have been through their high points and then both deteriorated in terms of quality of environment and support and projects. Historically attempts have been made to support the establishment of user groups. The Friends of Walker Park was set up in the mid 1980s and was one of the first user groups of its kind in the city. However it has now died a death. Apathy is seen as the main problem and attempts by the Parks and Open spaces section of Leisure Services have failed to re-establish a user group. One officer was based in the park for 20 years and when they left it 'weakened the park dramatically'. Now there is only a Recreation Development Officer to cover the whole of the East End, which constitutes a major work-load. Alongside this, the Walker Park Festival, a major summer event, has lost momentum. The park's playground is now also worn out – although there are now plans underway for its redevelopment.

When Walker Park was at its heyday in early 1990s and the Festival was going really strong – we had 21 different community organisations that put stalls in the park that day – all 8 primary schools took part in the football tournament. But when you're suddenly given the whole East End of the City to look after -you cannot give that commitment (Recreation official).

Despite this there is a perception that the park continues to be heavily used, as well being vandalized and abused, particularly by the roving youth.

Sometimes trees don't last long – the night that Walker Park was re-opened in May 1988, 26 trees were snapped in half.

This was seen elsewhere as well, such as in Walker Church yard – a large site – where a tree planting scheme was implemented, but all trees were ripped out the next day. At other times, when trees were planted together with the youth, it did not create a problem.

Youth and public spaces

The problems of public space and the behaviour of the youth are intertwined. Some see this as a decline in the provision of facilities for the youth.

When I first started in Walker Park the John Bost Youth Centre, Walker Youth Club, Walker Wheel and the Adventure Playground... Lots of stuff for teenagers up to the age of 25 – youth facilities – all those have closed over the years with cuts in services.

Mid 80s to early 90s was the height of it. Bosty was a catholic club – had to take your coat off and hang it up when you went in, really strict rules. Walker Youth Club – was run by the city council – it was slightly less strict but still had rules. Then there was the adventure playground in the park – the old style – we got all the kids there that nobody else would have. There was somewhere for everyone to go – we didn't bar kids from the adventure playground.

Safety and security are closely connected with the quality of public spaces and with the problem of the youth.

If it's a busy park then it's a safe park. As Walker Park has gone into decline – we've introduced a park keeper system ... We've also taken a decision to remove security from parks- we had security staff in parks- not seen as providing value for money – but we may re-evaluate that. New scheme has great deal of public support for having park keepers – it's what they do that's the problem. What they're able to do – you know, if you want them to be park keepers then they should be doing that job, not standing around and carrying a stick.

Yesterday, one of the park keepers was working on his own in Walker part – the other keeper was on holiday and he felt threatened. A whole group of kids surrounded him. He felt intimidated and moved off to work somewhere else in the park. Fear of youth – people shouldn't have to feel that at work

We tell park users that if they see anything then they should phone the police. That's important because at least the calls get logged and we can get some statistics – but people don't want any repercussions (Professional).

The Riverside

Walker Riverside Park was developed on reclaimed land (1985-1989). It is a linear site along the river – planted in a naturalistic way with scrub and native species, designed to have meadows and grassland rather than being a formal park. At the outset, the land was seen as a no-go area for the local community. An important aspect of this was the access to the park, which was via large bridges. There was also a sense in which the only thing that people perceived happening in there 'was abuse and misuse'.

The site was linked into West Walker Primary and supported by Ranger Services who had a remit to involve the local community and the local schools so that the site would be an environmental education resource. As well as the environmental remit, the ranger service was therefore seen as key in maintaining the site to a high quality.

It was felt that if it was maintained well and any vandalism or damage sorted instantly then that would keep it in good condition and promote feelings of ownership and pride (City Council Officer).

This was seen as being helped by additional resources on site – such as Walker Wheels, which was a motorbike facility, which took previous motorbike scrambling off the site into a proper organised facility.

When that closed in 1992/3, there was increased use of motorbikes on the site and a lot of the good work that had been done stopped. People started feeling it was unsafe to go – since then to be honest with you it's gone downhill. We've just done a quality audit of it and it's in a shocking state.

Although officials felt that the communities of Belmont Street and Pottery Bank used the site, none of the residents interviewed, even those living adjacent to the site, talked about using the Riverside as recreational space. Hence, even during its most successful period, it could

be argued that the Riverside only served a fraction of its potential in terms of the people using it for informal use, although the educational aspect was seen as being more successful.

Four years ago an unsuccessful attempt was made to set up a 'Friends of' for Walker Riverside'. The officers felt that although people were committed to the open space and would react if it was under threat, it was difficult to get involvement:

They'll not put their name down on a bit of paper...because they're frightened of intimidation.

In addition to the two parks, there are also allotment sites. One of these is a large site on Walker Road, classed in the Unitary Development Plan as permanent, although it may now be under threat from Going for Growth.

We've just spent £15K clearing 20 years of crap and the site is still not workable... You just reach a point of what do you do? To me it's endemic in that area. It's to do with apathy.

But the officer also argued that people may feel less committed to this aspect of neighbourhood life when every day lives are so difficult. Officials working on the Green Space Strategy felt that it was very important to persuade the Riverside's developers, Places for People that:

....good quality green space is the key to working neighbourhoods. That's what we're pushing all the time : that if you have your green space, then it attracts decent people into the area...and improves the whole economy. And open spaces and parks are one of the most inclusive forms of recreation you can get.

Places for People, in the preliminary stages of setting out a development framework, have identified a problem with public spaces. In particular they suggest that the Riverside and the Churchwalk centre just 'don't work' as public spaces.

5.5 Addressing the Problems: Authorities and Professionals

The main agency responsible for the open public spaces is the Cityworks Directorate of the City Council³. At the moment, a number of actors are carrying out work related to public spaces across the city – parks, countryside wardens, and those seconded into the Going for Growth team.

The Going for Growth strategy for public open spaces has been outlined in its Parks and Green Space Strategy⁴, which is designed to protect and enhance the quality of green and open space and improve the way that parks and public spaces are cared for. In so doing it seeks to assist the regeneration of the city, improve quality of life and halt the decline of green space. National guidance for this process has come from the Urban Green Spaces Task Force, which published its report in May 2002. There are also more co-ordinated efforts across the city council directorates to address issues of local and national importance, such as dog fouling and fear of crime. Much work has been done on environmental improvements through the East End Partnership and its regeneration of Shields Road⁵. Despite these efforts, however, there is a perception that open and green spaces are not dealt with strategically.

You find that across Newcastle - you don't have management plans for most of the open and green spaces. Budgets have been cut year on year. Politically – it's an issue which has been forced further and further down the agenda. We don't have a political champion within the council – it's not something that the councillors take

³ See directorates map in the Appendices.

⁴ Going for Growth Parks and Green Space Strategy (2002)

⁵ Merridew T (1999) Third sector politics in the new local governance.

seriously. So an issue for us is how to involve councillors and get member support – it takes more than just the officers (Professional).

On the ground there are wardens (ex-park keepers), park rangers and the estate officers from the Community and Housing directorate who report what goes on round the patch. Additionally, there is an environmental ward stewardship initiative, operated through the Cityworks directorate of the city council. This is a three year scheme and the ward steward has a fixed budget of £33k for 2002-03 to carry out environmental works within the ward and currently receives additional funding for a scheme to fix down litter bins.

Ward Stewards are important actors. They identify the maintenance work in the area, such as footpaths and lamps. In Walker Park they have recovered the surface of the bridge, which was necessary because it was very slippery. They have started to work with the officers from Leisure Services, who consider their work as very successful. They are seen to be in touch with the community, although it is not clear whether they will have enough status and power to be effective enough.

This is a point that would apply equally to many of those who work at the community level with people. Their status within the public administration system is partly determined by their location in the hierarchy. Officers such as Ward Stewards or Neighbourhood Wardens are appointed at a relatively low scale, and it is not clear whether they would have the necessary influence on the behaviour of other public officials in the area. If strongly linked with the Area Committees, however, their role can be backed up by community involvement and support.

At a recent presentation to the ward committee (an open meeting) the steward outlined a range of projects which people had said they would like to see resourced from the Ward Stewards budget. The aim of the meeting was to try to begin the process of prioritising from a long list. Whilst street lighting and traffic calming were identified as priorities by residents present at the meeting, they were discouraged from choosing these as unsuitable or expensive options which would use the whole budget without producing tangible results. Thus, residents were steered towards some of the more tangible projects such as minor paving works and graffiti.

Practitioners also, however, recognised that sometimes local geographies and local culture are overlooked in terms of understanding the operation and attachment to public spaces. So, for example, ward boundaries might be meaningless to residents compared with a physical boundary like Walker Road or how different spaces are valued may differ between residents and practitioners – so something like pigeons crees may not be valued by outsiders:

...pigeon crees might not be seen as important – something that can be displaced- or as not needing much space – but it can be people's way of life, part of their daily life.

5.6 Addressing the problems: informal networks

Residents have made some attempts to exert more control over public spaces. This has largely been localised, small-scale and temporary. Whilst professionals have been critical of residents apathy towards public spaces, residents themselves feel that they have been given very little support when they have attempted to take action. One of the reasons for this maybe a different view of which places in the neighbourhood are legitimate public spaces.

5.7 Co-ordinated Action

At the present moment there seems to be little in the way of co-ordinated action to address the problems of public space. There seems to be a lack of political or community champions seeking to raise this issue on the policy agenda, beyond the issue of safety and security in public spaces. Past approaches, which involved more support between residents and officers – such as through the user groups – had failed – partly due to the loss of dedicated officer

support. Currently, Environmental Ward Stewards are providing a co-ordination point through their attendance at the Ward Committee meetings.

5.8 Conclusions and Questions

Environmental quality remains an important question in the neighbourhood and there are concerns over how to maintain the streets and small green spaces as well as the large park areas. The interviewees raised a number of concerns over the formal and informal control of public spaces, the value and meaning attached to different spaces and the legitimacy of different groups of users to inhabit and use particular places. Whilst residents felt that the authorities were not taking adequate responsibility for the public spaces of the neighbourhood, some of the officers made similar statements about local residents. It is apparent that Going for Growth is concerned with the nature of public space and this theme has been taken up by Places for People, after consultation with local residents.

6 Schools and Education

6.1 Residents' Perceptions

Problems of growing up in Walker

One of the core issues for children and parents is the set of problems associated with growing up in a difficult neighbourhood like Walker. According to some residents, children grow up here on a knife-edge.

Drugs are easy to get hold of - your kids can go either way, even the good ones. I've been lucky – my son's a good lad. But the kids get talked down to and they are very grown up (Resident).

According to one resident, many children found it difficult to be optimistic about their future:

The kids round here by the time they're 16 they're saying what's the point – it's tragic. It's just kids you see going to the health centre at about 5pm – they've gone in for their dose of methadone (Resident).

Even if you bring your kids up OK – how do you know they'll be OK with all this going on around them? We'd leave for the sake of the kids. It's all really disheartening (Resident).

Problems of responsibility

Despite these problems, many consider the area as their home. They are frustrated that people are not taking action to deal with anti-social behaviour. There are various discussions relating the problems of criminal and anti-social behaviour with the problems of parenting. There is widespread belief, especially on the part of authorities, that some people no longer accept responsibility for their children due to the demise of the work culture and dependency on the state.

At the same time, the local government's relationship with local people is weakened due to the predominance of the central government in making major decisions which have direct impacts on people's lives. This relative absence of local connections and leadership leads to some gaps in expectations, causing disillusionment and blurring of roles and responsibilities. On the other hand, there are those who do not see a link between social problems and parenting, as they see it as a reflection of structural economic transformation, which has disrupted a way of life. In any case, it appears that parents, and step-parents, would welcome support dealing with children, support that can come from school or beyond the school gates.

Good schools

The issue of education and schools was not of major concern to many of the residents we interviewed. Many parents felt there were good primary and secondary education opportunities within, or close to the neighbourhood.

We've got good schools. Pottery Bank is a good school, and the Catholic School and Wharrier Street and West Walker. Walker Technology College is a brilliant school (Resident).

I went to school at West Walker, then Walker School. They were OK. I liked West Walker that's where I'm putting my daughter (Resident).

We've got four good primary schools here.....Even where there were problems at Wharrier Street (the exclusions received a lot of backing from the other parents), kids' parents recognise the problems (Spider).

There is no secondary provision located within the ward, but Walker Technology College (Walker School) lies just on the boundary. This caters for 11-16 year olds and has a sixth form for 16-18 year olds. The school has an excellent reputation for pastoral care and its approach to student welfare.

Even when there are problems with one school, parents are generally satisfied with the schools as a whole.

Mine goes to St Albans – he was inoriginally – but we had quite a few problems with them – after a year in the nursery I got a place for him at St Albans and I find that 110% better... They keep their children in check discipline-wise. The work they come home with – they're constantly getting homework – but I think that's a good thing. And they've got after-school clubs (Resident).

It's a popular school but they're only allowed to take 20% non-catholic. But they've also got a mix of ethnic minorities – I don't know whether that's part of their policy. And they've got the special school St Charles Parsons next door – where the kids are physically and mentally impaired – so the kids can get to see that as well – as a normal thing (Resident).

6.2. Young Residents' Perceptions

The group of young residents selected for interview were those who had fared least well in the formal education system and had mainly 'dropped out' without achieving any formal qualification. They had however subsequently been steered by the Careers Service (Connections) into a local training project, which was providing basic training in life skills as a priority. When asked about their experiences of school, many of the young people were dismissive. One said:

I can't remember much about it – I didn't stick it (Young resident).

For many the response was similar to the feelings they had about the neighbourhood – it was okay or alright.

6.3 Professional / Practitioner Perceptions

Working under difficult conditions

School officials felt that the school operates under difficult conditions, which are not readily appreciated from the outside. Much effort has been channelled into improving the self-esteem of students. Thus they have developed an extensive reward and certification approach, and offer a range of opportunities including foreign exchanges and an Alternative Curriculum geared to keep children in danger of exclusion in the system through getting them involved in outside provision. As a result there are quite low levels of exclusion at the school.

The approach is backed up by having a Learning Support Department which they would like to extend further. So for example, they could offer pupils 6-8 weeks out of class to do anger management. However they currently don't have the resources to extend their work in this way. Moreover they have also been, to some extent, victims of their own success:

Last year we were targeted to some extent by schools and authorities. We picked up a huge number of pupils with difficulties. Difficulties with behaviour (emotional) that swamped us and caused us massive problems. In fact we still haven't recovered from it (Professional)

Since then, dialogue with the authorities has meant that this experience has not been repeated. However they are still to some extent feeling the aftermath of some students requiring one to one attention– 'whether they were in the corridor or in the classroom'.

One of the ongoing problems faced by the school is a high level of absenteeism, which is to a degree condoned by the parents. There is a 'Z' register of some 88 pupils who are regular non-attendees; the ones who are 'falling through the net':

Some have been monitored now for 5,6,or 7 years, we know who they are, what their attendance is and what the problems are. But we're very limited in what we can do. (Professional)

There is a sense in which front-line services are under-resourced and find themselves operating without the necessary infrastructure support systems. Hence despite multi-agency group working, there are not the resources to call upon to follow-up problems satisfactorily.

There is a massive need in this area for support systems for students (Professional).

Additionally, support from the local community is not always forthcoming. Residents who complain about pupil behaviour regard the problem as one belonging to the school, rather than to the local community as a whole.

Relations between schools and others

Despite the positive innovations in the school system, particularly through welfare policies, there was a sense in which both providers and recipients of the services felt that without more integrated support for children and their families outside the school gate, it was very difficult to secure the types of deep-rooted changes needed. The infrastructure beyond the school gates was missing.

At the same time, the outside agencies felt that the support from the schools could be stronger. To deal with the wider problems of the neighbourhood, other professionals have tried to build or maintain links with the schools. But this has not been easy, which was attributed to a lack of will or of resources:

I would go into schools – I introduced myself to them when I started and said if you want us to come down then give us a call. No-one has yet. (Professional)

Currently we don't work with the schools – we had wanted to do a 14-16 year old course – prevention's better than cure – getting them before - But if academically it doesn't sit with them no matter how much work you put in – it isn't going to work. Unfortunately it's like everything else – they don't have the funding – and we need the funding to set the programme up. (Professional)

A group - Monster Production – have worked with schools on a food initiative and theatre group – working with Wharrier Street – they have an allotment but there doesn't seem to be the will. (Professional)

Education provision has by necessity had to respond to the difficult social issues in the neighbourhood. However whilst key changes have taken place in the provision of services, gearing towards the priority of self-esteem, which have led to new forms of funding and systems of governance, there is a constant need to apply and re-apply for additional funding. Whilst the educators feel they are providing the best service they can, they are well aware of the constraints and of the threat of punishment rather than an emphasis on rewards.

I've tried to get something started for the kids before – I mean there is Kids Kabin (over 8s) – but older teenagers don't want to be doing arts and crafts. They need a place they can go – get help and advice – have a game of pool and just hang out with their friends. There's nowhere for them to go. If you try and do something, there's always a barrier or problem – or you can't just do that for one set of kids you'd have to do it for other groups. So nothing gets done because of political correctness. Politics seems to be part of the problem. It's not rocket science, is it? (Resident)

6.4 Addressing Problems: Authorities and Professionals

Education Strategy and Neighbourhood Regeneration

According to the Director of Education and Libraries:

We aim to provide the very best for our young people; an educational system that has high expectations of every learner, which builds self-esteem, life and learning skills, as well as ensuring high academic standards.

The regeneration strategy, Going for Growth, also emphasizes education as one of its key priorities, by aiming to create:

A city that is competitive, cohesive and cosmopolitan within which education is seen as a core plank for countering social exclusion and facilitating the regeneration vision.

Whilst Going for Growth offers one stimulus for the improvement of educational provision within the neighbourhood – a new neighbourhood centre encouraging new types of employment opportunity, it also represents something of a threat to the status quo. The existence of four primary schools serving the neighbourhood, combined with the decreasing population led to proposals in the original Going for Growth plans to rationalize provision through some school closures:

There are a lot of schools but through Going for Growth they're looking to close and merge because of the falling numbers. (Professional)

There was a plan to combine three of the four – but all that has been scrapped. We haven't discussed it in the network because it isn't an issue yet. They say there are no plans and we have to believe them. (Spider)

Despite the shifting governance regime within and around education provision in the neighbourhood and some high profile exclusions from one of the primary schools, an overriding sense of resident satisfaction with the schools in the area means in one regard there is little to report. It should, however, be noted that good efforts by the schools have not been able dramatically to change the low educational attainment levels in the neighbourhood.

Most of the commentary on schooling has come from educational officials concerned about their capacity to provide an education resource which can overcome or ameliorate some of the difficulties faced by pupils and their families.

Education Action Zone

From November 2001 a small education action zone (EAZ) for Newcastle East was set up. These are now known nationally as EiC (Excellence in Cities) Action Zones. The overarching Excellence in Cities initiative is designed to address the educational problems of the major cities where educational standards are low and to create and enable partnerships to undertake 'radical' innovations to raise educational standards and tackle deep-rooted problems.

Typically they focus on a single secondary school and its associated primaries. East Newcastle follows this model. Here the EiC Action Zone consists of Walker Technology College and five primary schools comprising St. Anthony's CE Primary School (Pottery Bank), Tyne View Primary, West Walker Primary, Wharrier Street Primary and from an adjoining ward Welbeck Road Primary. (Welbeck Road and Wharrier Street are the two main feeder schools for Walker Technology College). The EAZ involves some 3000 students. Outside the EAZ, but also serving the neighbourhood for primary education are Monkchester Road Nursery, St Albans Catholic School and Sir Charles Parson special needs school.

Each EiC receives £250,000 a year for three years (plus any match funding) and may be able to extend this period. The EiC Action Zone is non-statutory and has a management partnership. Whilst a project officer may be employed on a temporary basis the expectation is that non-statutory Action Forums will be the main support system so that the scope for

sustaining initiatives beyond the life of the zone is enhanced. The main aims of the zone are to improve the quality and consistency of teaching, raise literacy levels and improve the attendance and management of pupil behaviour.

The 'family of schools' operating in the neighbourhood since 2000 has also contributed to the re-branding of Walker School as Walker Technology College under the government's Specialist Schools Programme, which encourages secondary schools to develop specialisms. Technology colleges focus on maths, science and technology, seeking to promote a more enterprising and vocational learning environment through four year development programmes.

The East End Partnership has made a high profile £2 million plus investment in education through Walker School. However despite the improved quality of facilities at the school there were some reservations over effectiveness of delivery through the project:

We made a significant level of investment mainly around ensuring post-16 education opportunities as part of the school's bid to gain technology status. But also to extend adult education and community opportunities. I'm not saying the school hasn't been successful but I can certainly identify a number of other providers across the East End who in terms of quality and quantity against cost – are better value for money. (Professional)

Under the new 'family of schools' approach which has yielded 'a quite tight-knit system' (local teacher) a range of new initiatives are being tried.

Walker Technology College plays a big part in area. They have a very good policy – kids have to have a pass out at lunch with a nominated destination – without it they have to stay within the school boundaries. Can get abused – kids coming into shopping centre causing minor nuisance. It's not a huge problem but you tend to get the residents group – the elderly residents saying they're terrible throwing rubbish all over. But if you ring the school you get a very good response – they'll send someone over. They've really got their act together at the school anyway. (Professional)

Walker School ... – performance, staying-on rates have improved dramatically over the past few years. Investment has meant that the facilities at the school are superb. (Professional)

Despite the efforts in alternative achievements and welfare, and despite much improved results it should be noted that the schools in the Walker area have not compared favourably with results from across the rest of the city and the rest of the country as the table below shows.

5 or more grades A-C	Local School	Newcastle Upon Tyne LEA	England
1998	14%	31%	46%
2001	25%	37%	50%

(Source: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cgi-bin/performance/tables/> 15/11/02)

Fig 3 School Results

However, Walker Technology college has dramatically improved its results ranking it as one of the schools nationally which have delivered the best 'value added'. Whilst in 2001 25% of pupils gained 5 or more A-C grades at GCSE, by 2003 this had increased to 58%, an overall increase of 33% (www.education.guardian.co.uk/gcses2003 (15-01-04)).

6.5 Co-ordinated Action

Within the education system there has been a recognition of the need for different schools to work more closely together and with parents. This is epitomised through the Education Action

Zone. However there is a sense in which the education system is seen as something apart from everyday life in the neighbourhood.

6.6 Conclusions and Questions

There was a sense amongst residents that the schools in the area were generally good, even in cases where results did not compare favourably with the city or country. Perhaps one of the main reasons for this is both a concerted effort to improve results, especially at secondary level, but also a staff highly dedicated to the welfare of pupils. The achievements in welfare and raising the self-esteem of pupils have made people proud of their local schools, as reflected by people identifying education workers as being people of influence and importance in the neighbourhood. Whilst representatives of the education sector felt that schools were doing as much as they could to bring about positive changes there was sometimes a sense that they did not receive as much support from central government, local government or the local community as they needed.

7 Employment and Unemployment

7.1. Structural change and earning a living

Although a long period of economic recovery in the 1990s and various training and employment schemes by the Labour government since 1997 have reduced the unemployment rates in the country and the region, the neighbourhood still suffers from high unemployment.

*There are huge problems with unemployment – that's the whole point of Going for Growth. The old employment has gone and there are not a lot of opportunities.
(Professional)*

The processes of social exclusion in Walker are directly associated with structural change in the economic base, as traditional industries have declined and almost completely disappeared leaving a work force whose skills are no longer needed.⁶ As the Census 2001 shows, the North East of England has heavily lost population, as those who could have followed jobs elsewhere. Those who have stayed are more under pressure to cope with the conditions of decline. The loss of connection to the world of work and the resources necessary for a 'working household' has been at the root of problems in the East End area. Disconnection from the world of work has inevitable negative consequences for individuals and for the social life of a community. The decline in the population of the area by the departure of a substantial number of skilled and resourceful residents has exacerbated these negative impacts.

7.2 Residents' Perceptions

The strong community spirit of the area grew initially from a shared history of work by men in large employment organisations. Sharing their time at work, in trade union activity and in pubs and clubs, men were at the core of the community. Whilst confined by the traditional division of labour, women were also centrally engaged in a cohesive social world. With economic development much of this has changed. Life for men who are unemployed has different routines and meanings, and has a destabilising effect on the community. These men stay in the house, and rarely go out with the exception of drinking and visiting friends. Their status in families and social networks, that are still influenced by traditional concepts relating to work and family life, becomes damaged, and as a result, damages their self image and self esteem. Traditional notions of 'men's work' may limit male employment opportunities. A woman from Walker referring to herself and her husband said,

It's easier for us than for a man to get a job, 'cos we can do cleaning or working in a shop and all that, but I don't think he would. (Resident)

Low wages present another obstacle for those seeking work. When wages on offer are comparable with or below benefit payments, many make a rational choice of opting to stay on benefits. One Walker resident claimed:

They say it gives you pride to work but you don't get the initiative to go back to work....when you've paid your gas, electric, food and rent, you're left worse off. It's not worth it and that's why a lot of people won't do it.

Low wages are also seen as a problem for the self employed, as a resident observed,

She's got her own shop, but she can't afford to give herself a big wage, and he's doing the job for a pittance.

⁶ This section partly draws on our previous research report, Madanipour & Bevan, Walker: A Neighbourhood in Transition.

The problem of male joblessness and lack of self esteem has posed major challenges for the middle aged men who lost their jobs in economic restructuring. Worse still, the impacts on the youth have been phenomenal, as the problems of youth crime and anti-social behaviour can be linked to the lack of job prospects and the absence of role models. In some households, three generations of men can be unemployed.

Unemployment – I think some of the young uns now they just don't want to work. I mean I'm finished with work I'm permanent sick now – but I worked all my life— I know some down here they've never struck a bat. There are some of them – they moved out of this street – they were moving into brand new houses and they didn't have to pay cos they weren't working – and they still haven't worked. I've been down here 30 odd year and some of them have never struck a bat. I think the whole thing is run wrong in this country – all wrong. Even people going to court – they know they can get away with it (Resident).

Other households are under severe pressure through unemployment, crime and drug and alcohol abuse, leading to the disintegration of the household. This in turn leads in many instances to many problems for children, including dropping out of school, low educational attainment, low self-esteem, and exposure to criminal and anti-social behaviour. Research conducted by some socially excluded youth (who were trained as researchers) revealed that this set of problems is shared by many children in deprived neighbourhoods⁷.

In many cases, therefore, the youth are seen as a major problem, as they are the point where all the four themes of the project are connected: unemployment, safety and security, public space, and schools and education. Perhaps this is why some residents tend to blame the youth for their overall approach.

You've got to make people responsible. The people don't live here so they don't know what happens. When we have any trouble now it's one youth who is bringing others onto the estate. Some of them have houses – they don't pay for anything- they just wreck things. We all used to get up and get to work. Now a lot of them are happy to sit here till 12 o'clock – they get things too easy off the DSS. They don't want to work... They don't work and they've got no sense of responsibility (Resident).

7.3 Young Residents' Perceptions

Young people were united in their concerns over their current and future employment prospects. At best some felt very uncertain as to what the future offered, whilst the others were more pessimistic. One young male argued there was 'nowt here, no jobs' and some felt that there was little for them in other parts of the city. Some were concerned that having left school without qualifications they were unlikely to have good job prospects anywhere. A couple of the young residents were considering college as the only way of getting on, after failing to even get job interviews.

7.4 Professional / Practitioner Perceptions

Amongst all the professionals there was a consensus that unemployment was a major, and perhaps the fundamental, problem in the neighbourhood. It was also argued by a number of them that the problems faced by the neighbourhood would no longer exist if people were able to do a fair day's work for a decent wage. Youth unemployment and third generation unemployment within families were seen as critical.

⁷ Social Exclusion as a Learning Process, an EC-funded comparative research involving the three cities of Malmö, Rotterdam and Newcastle/Gateshead. Ali Madanipour was the academic advisor to this project, which ran in 2001-2.

7.5 Addressing the Problems: Authorities and Professionals

Training and employment schemes In the East End there are a variety of services and facilities available to local people wishing to access training and/or employment.

- *The In Work Benefits Project*, run by the Citizens Advice Bureau offers information and advice on benefits, grants, childcare costs, maintenance and child support is available as an aid to those looking for work or training or currently in employment.
- *The Employment Access Initiative* provides a *Workfinder* operating from the East End Youth Information Project, providing service to Walker, Walkergate, Byker and Monkchester. Workfinders help the long-term unemployed into jobs and training by providing information regarding job vacancies as well as helping them put together application forms and CVs. Access to training to enhance skills for specific jobs and advice in interview techniques are also services offered by Workfinder.
- *Walker School* recently received a new sixth form block, aimed at giving senior students better facilities. The school's craft block has been replaced with state-of-the-art IT facilities.
- *Benfield School* acquired an *Open Learning Centre* for over 16s and adult learners in December 1998. The centre provides a wide range of courses aimed at developing the education and skills of local adults.
- *Walker Open Learning and Fitness (WOLF) Centre* based in the Church Walk Centre, offers ICT Training, a community radio and health related courses. The East End Partnership has provided the centre with over £250,000 in running costs.
- *The Community Action Training Initiative*, funded by The East End Partnership, Newcastle City Council's Community and Housing Directorate and Tyneside TEC enables 12 young people to train while carrying out decorating and gardening services for older residents and people with disabilities in the area. The project received a national award in 1998 for best training provider in the country.
- *The George Allison Community Centre*, based at Byker Primary School was launched in 1999 as an adult education centre. The East End Partnership funded the building and furnishing and provision of computers in the centre, in addition there is an Outreach Careers Officer based there. A further £400,000 grant will pay for staff, courses and running costs until 2003.
- *Aim High* is a project attached to Byker Community Education Project and match funded with SRB resources to provide an outreach careers guidance, life coaching and support service to adult residents of the East End. This service aims to help adults in this area identify and access appropriate education, training, voluntary work and employment opportunities.

In addition to the above, East End residents also have access to the following services, all of which supply a variety of adult educational courses:

- *Heaton Adult Education Centre*
- *Newcastle Outdoor Education Service*
- *City Works Training Centre*
- *The Newcastle Literacy Trust*
- *MCQ Mobile Care Qualifications* based at the Quayside Business Development Centre in Byker.
- *A Lifelong Learning Centre* is also in the process of being set up in the old Byker Library which will involve both union based learning and the local community.

The East End Partnership reported that during the period 2000-01, £168,000 of SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) funding and £191,000 of other resources were to be dedicated to building an adaptable and highly skilled workforce through employment access initiatives and raising educational achievement in secondary schools.

Whilst unemployment was seen by many as a huge issue –underlying many other aspects of life in the neighbourhood – there was also a sense in which people felt annoyed that officials assumed they didn't work and so could attend meetings during the day. That perhaps reflects more the opinion of people identified as 'spider' people – since amongst many of the organised groups such as Thomas Gaughan and the Walker and Riverside Community Network – one activist talked about how they had a good mix of people on the board.

Effectiveness of training schemes

Several officials identified the Rathbone Centre as important for trying to get young people on training schemes. However, there appears to be some issue over take-up and lack of awareness that the project exists. The client group of the Rathbone is mainly 16-18 year olds:

I would say we work with a very difficult client group in the sense that we work with young offenders and those who haven't been caught up in the system yet – perhaps even more of a problem than the ones who've been caught. It tends to be a male dominated centre – but if you look at the semi-skilled – it's even below that – you've got very, very basic skills here. They don't have particularly high aspirations and I think that is a reflection of around Walker anyway... I believe that is the case. If you look there are very few people who move out of Walker – the parents live here, the grandparents have lived in Walker. It's a cyclical thing which is very, very difficult to break (Professional).

Whilst the training schemes have had to shift their focus more towards life skills, it is acknowledged that this will not fill the gaps left by a lack of support from home and socially and academically.

The centre has predominantly been youth training – I think our provision is now more geared towards life skills now....these clients ...don't only need the academic side – they need pastoral care 24-7, because they don't get it from home (Professional).

Hence the ability to receive training is being undermined by the low level of life skills that the clients have. The Rathbone mainly focus on the softer targets of confidence-building and self-esteem, they are trying to change the mind-sets of young people and make them realise they have potential.

Something more is needed for the people here – especially youth (Professional).

There are lots of initiatives around, but it's how they're taken up (Resident).

Other local residents pointed to the loss of apprenticeships that gave young people a start in work.

7.6 Co-ordinated Action

There seems to be quite a number of ad-hoc projects and agencies seeking to address the problem of unemployment in the ward. The Going for Growth approach would seem to be the most strategic statement to date on addressing this issue in a more co-ordinated way. However, this has yet to be put into practice.

7.7 Conclusions and Questions

Long-term unemployment is a critical feature of life in the neighbourhood. Amongst both residents and practitioners, there was a feeling that unemployment was the root cause of many of the problems in the neighbourhood. Despite a sharp fall in unemployment in the country, the neighbourhood is still suffering from a high rate of unemployment. Perhaps the

difficulty of addressing this problem was one of the reasons why people did not have much to say beyond identifying it as a major problem. One concern was that the alternative lifestyles people were adopting were sometimes individualistic and anti-social, or irresponsible and too dependent on the state. There was also a degree of resentment amongst some of the activists, who felt that their efforts to improve the neighbourhood were at best unappreciated by some of their neighbours who have adopted a different lifestyle.

Part III: Neighbourhood Governance

8. Neighbourhood Governance

The third stage of the research explored more explicitly the meaning and experiences of neighbourhood governance in Walker. Interviews were conducted with a number of actors including residents and practitioners investigating the following themes: neighbourhood problems, mobilisation of actors, collaboration amongst actors, resident participation, developing capacity, the role of activists and spiders, dealing with conflict, overcoming obstacles, fighting stigma and new institutions. Sixteen interviews were conducted at this stage involving some new actors and revisiting some of the people previously interviewed in order to gain an insight into new developments. The range of interviews tended to provide two distinctive perspectives onto the neighbourhood. One very important narrative was around Going for Growth processes and practices. However an alternative perspective was given by those living and working in the neighbourhood and who were not connected – by choice or circumstance – to this overarching policy programme.

8.1 Neighbourhood Problems: Decline and Going for Growth

A range of proposed and actual changes form the overarching feature of neighbourhood life at present. Some of these changes are about trying to resolve some of the problems of the neighbourhood. Yet they are in themselves a source of tension within local relationships and are creating governance uncertainty and complexity.

As previously highlighted the Going for Growth strategy designed to remedy the problem of out-migration from the city, has during the period of the research, been the overarching story of potential change in the neighbourhood. It is unsurprising that many, but by no means all, discussions centred on the question of what this process means; Going for Growth touches upon and influences almost all aspects of life in the neighbourhood. However, the delays in implementing Going for Growth have – for those involved – created uncertainty and a sense of fatigue – and it is a moot point as to how many people beyond the active residents' feel that it has much to do with them.

Problems in the neighbourhood including high levels of unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment, poor services, and a decreasing population are in a sense overshadowed by the 'threat' and / or 'opportunity' of urban renaissance, particularly along the riverside, which has come to dominate local policy agendas.



It is also combined with a shift in the way that housing services are to be managed as Your Homes Newcastle is launched as the new Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder begins to implement its regeneration programme.

Fig 4 Empty Homes in Pottery Bank

Going for Growth is about saving an area from decline. In this respect it focuses on addressing the problems of the area rather than on its residents. The strategy is justified on the basis that the future of the neighbourhood will depend upon being able to shift away from the dominant mode of social housing provision to a more diverse tenure base and population social mix. Hence the case for change is being couched in the language of a 'spiral of decline' and the solution is about new housing and jobs – based upon a new population of owner-occupiers. For a neighbourhood characterised by a strong degree of conservatism and to some extent parochialism, as well as a strong sense of pride – this has engendered a great deal of anger and anxiety amongst local residents – exacerbated

by the initial marking of some houses in purple on a map to represent demolition sites. There is a very real fear – especially amongst some of the elder residents - that their homes will be demolished and other residents feel as though their lives have been put on hold. One practitioner involved in the process remarked:

At every meeting wherever we go it's 'never mind all that ...is me house staying or going?' – that kind of thing.

Whilst the officer argued that this was a narrow perspective to take on the strategy, there was also the acknowledgement that it could be difficult for residents:

...there is a danger that we could really unsettle people here. I was at a tenants meeting last week where one person became really upset and actually had to leave the room.

The city council is under pressure from the local population and central government. On the one hand, central government has pressed for modernization and restructuring of the local authorities and the implementation of the urban renaissance agenda. On the other hand, they are under pressure from the local population to deliver better services and improve local conditions.

Going for Growth, however, has created a mixture of dynamism, optimism, cynicism, anger and fear. The developers Places for People find themselves caught between the pressures from the city council and those from the community. Places for People are shaping Going for Growth processes on the ground and are accountable to both the council and the community. Currently the mediating of relationships is taking up vast amounts of time and is described as 'sometimes difficult'.

Prior to the review of the Places for People contract, some professionals registered concern that there was a slight shift in political support away from the developers. This followed from a multi-million pound land sale in the neighbourhood and led councillors to question whether they needed to involve developers in the way that they have and whether the city council could not themselves undertake the regeneration programme. However at the Cabinet meeting in May 2003 it was agreed to back the developers Places for People to build 1,350 new homes in Walker – allowing the group to move forward to the next stage of the regeneration plans which focus on the Riverside area. The plan will continue to be scrutinised by the Outer East Going for Growth Advisory Group.

From the community perspective, the lack of tangible progress has led to some scepticism. This builds upon pre-existing frustrations at, for example, not being able to get basic housing repairs carried out. There are also other aspects of everyday life in the neighbourhood, which are not really addressed through the Going for Growth strategy. For example, one of the aspects of neighbourhood problems as raised by residents in the previous round concerned anti-social behaviour. The need to appeal to a potential new population of owner-occupiers may lead to outcomes which suit the new-comers (in order to attract them in) rather than address the problems of the existing community. This is a potential tension of which all actors are aware; as one practitioner commented:

People feel that the yuppies will take over and that existing residents will get the thin end of the wedge.

The commitment that exists to the process could also be undermined by a watering down of the proposals – with the danger that limited tangible outcomes could lead to even more deeply ingrained scepticism.

A new set of processes as problems emerged more clearly in the final stage of the research. The context has become more complex. There is debate and concern over governance agendas and over the scales and meaning of change. Whilst there seems to be additional dimensions of change to accommodate, there is evidence that there is some **fatigue** with the Going for Growth strategy, announced three years ago by the city council as an urgent case

for change. After waiting for a long time and living with anxiety, people still do not know how this process might affect them personally and their neighbourhood.

Meanwhile the nature of problem definition in the neighbourhood is being guided by this overarching strategy. Thus there is a key issue of *who is defining* neighbourhood problems. The very nature of the city council-led Going for Growth process means that currently, to a large degree, all neighbourhood problems are being subsumed within a set of problems defined by the city council. Although this may encompass a wide range of problems as experienced by local people, it gives priority to the understanding that neighbourhood demise will continue unless there is a more mixed population. There is therefore a dominant, although by no means exclusive, emphasis upon the need to improve the physical fabric of the neighbourhood through better design and provide new housing to attract new owner-occupiers into the neighbourhood.

Amongst some professionals who are involved in some way with Going for Growth, there is now a concern with how implementation processes will unfold. Judged by its history, it would suggest that this will not just be a straightforward process. Governance systems are becoming more complex as new players come on board and there will be a search for *mechanisms to deliver* the programme. How these will relate to the type of changes taking place at a corporate level in the city – particularly the review of the new political management structures and the potential break-up of the Community and Housing Directorate - are not known. At the moment there is a sense that very few individuals have a comprehensive understanding of both the formal and informal mechanisms. Places for People have suggested that eventually they will be in a position to take this overview and have been working hard to do this by 'spending time out and about in Walker.'

Whilst Going for Growth is very high profile for some local actors, amongst others it is barely recognised as a force for change or it is being deliberately ignored until it becomes clearer which proposals are likely to be implemented, when and how.

Real change in the neighbourhood

A further strand that has emerged is the degree to which this process will lead to outcomes and the extent of change this will entail and who will really be affected. The high drama of change and the deep concern with process issues can also be juxtaposed against an emergent concern that maybe the *degree of change* has been over-stated and that the resultant re-development of the neighbourhood may be less effective than imagined. There is a fear that an anti-climax of this kind could result in the further alienation of the local residents from the city council. It seems that the ambitious nature of the original proposals are being watered down – the area affected in the early phase is likely to be more compact, the changes slower than anticipated and less dramatic than initially thought: 'what is all the fuss about?' scenario. As one practitioner commented:

The task is major. Progress will be slow.

Some are fearful that there may end up just being a spiral of decline, others that there may be even more fragmented relations between the city council and the community if there is little to show for three years of threat and promise of change in the neighbourhood.

Diversifying the population also has political implications for a die-hard Labour ward. Socially and religiously the population base of the city and Walker is changing as the asylum seeker and refugee population grows and questions about how to achieve integration have been highlighted by some practitioners. However as the asylum seeker and refugee population in Walker is a relatively new phenomenon, immediate concerns are about reception and settling in, rather than integration.

4.2 Mobilisation of actors

Residents

There is a strong loyalty to Walker and an appreciation of the strong social networks which survive – from just knowing people, through to engagement in community and voluntary activity. The rich networks of community and voluntary groups are an important means by which people operate in their community.

Residents themselves are part of a traditional and stable community - many originally migrants from other parts of the British Isles brought in to work in the shipyards. There are lots of informal community networks often providing social support of one form or another and a network of community associations. Whilst these serve an important social function residents may not want to develop it further into engagement with neighbourhood governance processes. As one officer commented:

There are lots of groups who aren't involved at the moment – not that they're excluded – it just means that they are the type of group who wouldn't chose to. Bingo groups are set up for the social aspect – people go there to talk about what is in the shops ...where the bargains are.

A number of groups are flourishing – residents groups, church groups and community associations who do not want to become formalised. Whilst some development workers may find this 'frustrating', they are still working with and supporting these groups.

Even though they will not constitutionalise or become a formal group...they raise issues and get them resolved and they get the community development team support to do that.

However, there appears to be a tendency in the city council to want to formalise resident group activity. As one local councillor commented:

We have had tenants groups for a number of years but it has never been managed in a cohesive way. Now it is. (via Walker and Riverside Community Network) ..we've been quite adamant from the start that people become representatives from the democratic structure. The organisation has to be properly constituted, have an annual meeting. I would love to see a representatives' forum without any input from councillors. But you can't accept any self-interest groups.

There are also a range of community projects which are well-embedded into the fabric of the neighbourhood, such as the Thomas Gaughan centre in Pottery Bank. This was established about eight years ago when the council closed down the day centre operating there, and a group of five residents fought for it to become a local community centre. This now forms the basis for a lot of community activity and whilst the fabric of the centre may now be a bit worn out, residents are rightly proud of their achievements. A community catering enterprise, which has developed and flourished in the Thomas Gaughan centre, is now used as a good practice example with people coming from all over the country to find out more about it. The rather drab building is a focal point for the local community and is well-used by a variety of groups. It also has a café, a health project and is an important information point for the local community. More recently, after some initial tensions and hostilities, it has also become an important resource for some of the asylum seeker and refugee population. As one person remarked:

I go there and use the internet, the people are really friendly.

The Thomas Gaughan centre is one illustration of effective community mobilisations to secure community resources before Going for Growth. However the more recent mobilisations and new forms of community mobilising have arisen largely as a response to the threat of Going for Growth and have been shaped and supported by the community development project.



Fig 5 The Thomas Gaughan Community Centre, Pottery Bank

Two areas marked as 'purple' for demolition on the original City Council draft master-plans, Hexham Avenue at the north end of Walker and the Cambrian estate at the south end of Walker along the riverside, are two important sites of mobilisation. Here, mobilisation has secured better quality and more stable

community relations, has engendered a new sense of civic pride and strengthened community identity. These mobilisations represent significant stocks of *social capital* in the neighbourhood.

In the case of Hexham Avenue the residents group, which includes local nuns, have secured a community house and have a development worker based there. Although Cambrian residents have been able successfully to raise funds and have done much work to support children and elderly residents on the estate – they would like, and feel they have been denied the opportunity, to have their own community building.

Overall Going for Growth has provided an impetus for the reinvigoration of community relations through incidences of localised mobilisation. With support from the community development team, parts of this have been developed into the overarching umbrella of the Walker and Riverside Community Network (WRCN). Away-days organised by Places for People and their partners have helped to maintain the momentum of the network. However its existence has been threatened by the some residents feeling the need to move on.

Whilst some of the initial mobilisation was based upon resistance to the threat of Going for Growth, and community development workers were mainly focussed on the riverside area and the development of the WRCN, their remit has expanded. Work with residents groups in other parts of the neighbourhood not immediately affected by the Going for Growth process has led to the creation of a new, second network, the Monkchester and Walker Partnership (launched 2003). This has been much more top-down led than the WRCN but there has been good attendance at the meetings. The new network is less focussed on the issue of Going for Growth and residents have highlighted major social issues in the neighbourhood as being drugs and alcohol misuse. They have also raised fears about the lack of jobs, young people and a loss of community feeling that needs to be rejuvenated before levels of apathy grows even more. Another key aim for the group was to build better relationships with the councillors.

Hence community development work in the neighbourhood has provided an important catalyst for formalising residents groups and bringing them together under new umbrella organisations. This work is ongoing but community development workers are optimistic about the future of these structures.

The community development work, which has been conducted in the wake of the introduction of Going for Growth has provided an important catalyst to community mobilisation and the development of participation in the neighbourhood – an opening up. Another side to this is, a fear that communities have become too mobilised and need to be held in check so that they don't undermine representative democracy. However alongside this is the difficulty of maintaining the momentum of community activism when people become despondent about the process.

Other Actors

We have particularly focussed our attention on the mobilisation of residents. There seems to be little mobilisation from local business interests, although the owner-occupiers group on Walker Road which includes a number of landlords and local businesses has been mixed in its views of what should happen to the area. Whilst some of this group have 'cut and run', others have fought to seek clarification and reassurances from the council about their future.

Initial valuations of properties in the area for the purpose of compulsory purchase were felt to be derogatory and the group has successfully mobilised to secure a better deal from the city council.

Apathy, non-mobilisation and exclusion

Some residents, however, remain still very much on the outside – especially young people, asylum seekers and refugees.

Amongst residents active in policy networks the process issues surrounding Going for Growth are of major concern. This represents a distinct difference from those residents who are not involved and who know little about this policy process, despite media coverage, meetings and newsletters delivered to their door.

There is an acceptance that some of the most excluded are hard-to-reach groups. Many of these may not have an interest in being part of formal systems and processes. The key message from the community development project is that there is a need to keep information flows going. They are also exploring new approaches to reaching some of the most hard-to-reach groups. For example, the thriving social clubs in Walker might be one route to contacting hard-to-reach males, but there is an issue of how to work with people in that context.

For other groups, such as church representatives, who would willingly engage in policy processes there is a feeling that their contribution has not always been welcome nor taken seriously, primarily by the city council. One outcome has been that some of the local churches have responded through alternative networks and structures.

Many asylum seekers who arrive in Walker, will have been part of a 'dispersal' policy operated by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) run by the Home Office in a partnership arrangement with local authorities. Best estimates suggest that around 1000 people may have been relocated to the East End as part of this programme.

Walker has about 120 properties in this scheme, mainly 2-bedroomed flats referred to as a 'two-bed space'. This allows the city council asylum seeker unit to operate a 'cluster' policy to try and group people who are from the same country or share a language. It has been argued that this provides a successful basis for the development of informal networks and can help overcome feelings of isolation.

Residents themselves have mobilised to offer support to incoming asylum seekers, often through the church – the Common Ground Project now exists in the Churchwalk shopping centre dedicated to providing grass-roots support to asylum seekers and refugees.

The churches

The Catholic, Anglican and Methodist churches regard themselves as very much part of the local voluntary sector and are active in providing services, supporting other service providers and making themselves visible within both the formal and informal mechanisms of governance. Whilst they are working with many projects locally, often behind the scenes, they are part of, and lead, an alternative network the East End Community and Voluntary Sector Project (EECVSP). This has origins within the former Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) partnership for the East End (covering mainly Shields Road area) which had a strong input from the church on community and voluntary representation. This, along with the 'Ouseburn partnership marked the beginning of a new era of formal community and voluntary sector involvement in local partnership working.

Some representatives from the churches in Walker argue that without their backing there might well not be a community development project in the East End, since there was quite a degree of ambivalence from the city council over the project.

The Anglican church also runs a special project in the study area called Urban Ministry and Theology Project (UMTP), an intermediate structure for addressing three areas of concern including regeneration issues. This is a national initiative, with this area as one of its test

cases. The project covers 6 Anglican parishes in 4 wards – Walker, Byker, Monkchester and Walkergate. The church members participate in different forums, support the work of community development workers and have spent time building relationships across the different churches city-wide. As the established church engages in voluntary networks, their role places them across the three different public, private and voluntary sectors, which creates complexity and ambiguity.

As the neighbourhood was formed originally by migrant Catholic workers, the Catholic church seems to be well placed in the neighbourhood. This may not lead to a direct engagement with formal government frameworks. It, however, gives the church a position of influence in neighbourhood governance.

The church's contribution to regeneration has received a mixed response. At times, they have not been taken seriously, or been seen to compete for influence over the community, or simply as trouble-makers for their disapproval of some of the methods used by the city council. In any case, they are actively engaged in neighbourhood processes and wish their role to be acknowledged. As the faith groups are represented in the regeneration forums around the country, they see their role to become increasingly important in the future.

The private sector

There is a general lack of private sector involvement reflecting its lack of presence in Walker and also some difficulties over its engagement. As a poor area, it has not attracted the investment of the large private sector firms. Even some of the firms such as retailers that used to have a presence have withdrawn, due to lack of security and low return on their investment. The private sector presence is mainly confined to a few shops along the main roads, and some retailers in the Church Walk centre.

This is potentially going to change with the Going for Growth implementation, which brings in new private sector investments for development. Furthermore, if successful, GfG hopes to bring into the neighbourhood new residents, which in turn would invite new businesses to settle here. All this would potentially lead to a stronger private sector presence in the neighbourhood.

The council members seem to have good private sector contacts, but there is a feeling that they would have to tread carefully in securing their involvement in neighbourhood governance processes as this could be misunderstood. As one community development worker commented:

We need to sort out the community first and then worry about the private sector.

8.3 Collaboration amongst actors

The relationship among actors suffered a heavy blow with the publication of Going for Growth strategy. Since then however, much work has been invested in creating new relationships as well as trying to heal the old ones. This has been done in new and sometimes difficult ways.

Formal mechanisms for collaboration

At least three levels of area-based committees are meant to provide the essential mechanisms for collaboration in the city.

At the corporate level, there is the new mechanism of the **City-Wide Strategic Partnership** – the Newcastle Partnership. As yet it is unclear how this will link into the neighbourhood structures. But it has brought together representatives from all the major agencies and from the community sector. The council's senior officers are involved in the partnership and the community co-ordinators are given the task of feeding back to the neighbourhood. There are area team meetings between the community development team and the community co-ordinators every six weeks.

At the medium level, there is an **Area Committee** which covers the East End. It is seen, however, as being top-down without a presence from the community representatives. The AC is a strategic forum which, although local people are encouraged to attend, attracts fewer residents than the Ward Committee.

At the local level, a **Ward Committee** is in place, which includes representatives from different local actors. One of the officers has described the Ward Committee structure as the 'lifeblood' of the local area, providing a forum for collaboration among the stakeholders with an interest in the neighbourhood. This committee's role is now under review and may change with the new boundary changes.

Local political relations however seem, potentially at least, to be limiting collaborative relations. The culture of East End politics has given it something of a reputation and the local politicians have been dubbed 'the East End mafia'. One of our interviewees described it as 'the hard edge of politics in Newcastle'. In many cases the reputation of the long-standing councillors, with connections to union positions in the ship-yards, can sway the type of relationships which are formed with them. One issue that has arisen is that officers are unsure about political practices and the reputation of the councillors means that 'officers can be incredibly nervous of them'. This has led to a situation in which officers may be afraid to share with the members and can result in officers trying to second-guess them. As a consequence councillors themselves may feel as though they are the ones being left out of the loop – the ones who are being excluded. This is likely to work against the establishment of collaborative relations – even within the city council.

In terms of their relationship with the community – some individual councillors may be supporting increased community involvement but the bigger picture is a difficult one to work against. At the moment there seems to be a schism between those councillors who have really supported the process of giving the community a greater voice in local policy processes and others who have been a bit more reluctant to endorse these kinds of changes. To this extent some politicians may themselves feel quite isolated in their support for community engagement.

The community and voluntary networks

Within the community and voluntary sector a number of tiers exist from the individual residents groups which may cover a street or estate up to the two new networks which cover the Riverside and Monkchester and Walker, finally leading up to the more strategic East End Forum. Whilst it now seems that a lot of the bits are in place, it is quite early in the process to understand how they might connect up.

Because of the dominance of the local authority in the governance of Walker, third sector projects and processes can tend to be perceived as somewhat 'behind the scenes'. Understanding the community and voluntary sector can be difficult even when it is active and vibrant. Many of the projects struggle to obtain core funding and are commonly under-resourced. Under these circumstances they can find it difficult to maintain regular and ongoing relationships with other related projects in the neighbourhood. As one youth worker explained, '*we just keep our heads down really*'. This can mean that they are not getting together, except perhaps for one-off events etc., even when they have good awareness of related projects in the local area.

One pressure for collaboration in the local voluntary sector has come about through the central government policies on youth services. There is a range of voluntary sector youth agencies operating in Walker and they have been brought together through the local authority to help plan local youth services. Hence in this sector, providers of youth services are now sitting down and starting to talk to each other.

New voluntary projects have also sprung up in response to new challenges and needs in the neighbourhood, an important recent example being the Common Ground project to support asylum seekers and refugees. However, this too relies on huge amounts of voluntary effort and insecure funding.

Connections between the city council and the local residents

Public relations between the community and elected members are formally mediated through the ward committee structures and through the area committees. According to one officer, however, '*neither ...seems to give local people a chance*'. The area committee '*tends to get bogged down in the mundane and is not strategic*'. Overall, it has been suggested that in any case the area committee does not have a clearly defined purpose. Often the working business of the committee is to receive reports from the city council and to have someone present a summary of these reports. There are legacies from previous committees or institutional inertia, which seem embedded within the current structure and seem difficult to shake off – e.g. the East Area Housing Committee.

One officer has argued that whilst there is an acceptance of the need to open the committee up to the community further, there are concerns about how this could be achieved without members losing control. Under the current format and style, with the councillors at the front of the room and a significant number of senior officers in attendance, it would seem difficult for community members to make a contribution. Unless they were extremely well-informed the atmosphere and general set-up make it difficult to ask questions, seek information or make comments. For example, at a recent meeting when there were about 6 community representatives in the room, there was a presentation on the proposed new ALMO for housing in the city. The talk was given by a city council officer standing at the front of the room but following this there was no discussion or debate. As one officer commented, 'the content of the meetings tends to be very dry'.

Despite some of the shortcomings, it seems the area committee is now being considered as the local area body for the city-wide strategic partnership.

The other body for doing some of the linking-up work is the ward committee structures. Some have argued that the ward committee is the forum where local people should have a voice. But again the set up of the meetings is formal, usually held at tea-time and no transport is provided to the meetings or child-care. Even opening things out a bit at this level seems to be quite challenging for the city council and as one interviewee said, support would be needed to, 'hold the hand of members and lead them through'.

The ward committees are now under review and may well be subject to some gradual change. Already, however, the review task has been seen as having mixed outcomes by some people, even 'muddying the waters further'. The ward boundary changes with the loss of the Monkchester ward will further complicate matters.

Whilst these structures may have the potential to broaden the interface between the council and the community, they remain, perhaps understandably, dominated by the Community and Housing Directorate. The local housing officers working through the decentralised housing offices tend to have a high degree of local knowledge about people and events in their patch of the neighbourhood. But, in terms of participation the stress is mainly upon the community development team workers and the ward community co-ordinators. The latter see themselves as the link between the city council and local community groups and work with 'whoever is out there'. It is their role to report back to councillors and other officers.

Fragile relationships

The churches regard themselves as attempting to radicalise relations between the city council and the local community and voluntary sector. Whilst seeking to establish a more collaborative basis for relationships it may be the case that this is in some respects perceived as a threat.

Where collaborative relations have been able to develop with reasonable success, there is some concern that these are now being exposed to quite a lot of pressure. As the Going for Growth process needs to make some hard decisions and confront the community with them – the community development project which had begun to underpin such major changes in relationships, now finds itself more finely posed between the corporate decision-making and the community. There is a sense that they may now be entering a period of more fragile

relations with the community. According to one officer they are also finding it increasingly difficult to bridge the gap between the community and the master-planners.

The master-planning approach has engaged - to varying degrees - with a small core of highly committed activists who are deeply engrained in the neighbourhood and embedded in the social networks. However, as they form their group structures, they have made themselves the target for different policy agendas. One officer working with these groups felt like they were being pulled backwards and forwards for different purposes – illustrating that it can be difficult to exist outside the pressures of governance and be able to have a community voice. Community networks have now become an easy route for consultation with the community by the city council – lots of people may want to hang their process on these fragile branches, which perhaps need more nurturing and even protecting.

Some of the more positive and less formal ways in which the city council had an interface with local people also seem to have been undermined. For example Walker Park used to be a major focal point for children and youth activities. This really positive feature of neighbourhood life has been undermined by cut-backs in dedicated resources for management and maintenance. This represents the degradation of a major community resource, which given that it is owned and managed by the city council, provided a setting where informal and positive relations could develop.

8.4 Participation of residents

Walker residents have been active in setting up resident groups and networks. This has been successful in raising concerns and establishing forums for communication and discussion. It has, at the same time, been loaded with tensions between these networks and the city council, and mistrust has persisted on both sides. The existence of this mistrust and its persistence are mainly due to the radical nature of Going for Growth initiative, which has suggested large scale change in many aspects of neighbourhood life. The general picture here is of a degree of success, coupled with a tension between social capital and political capital and between participatory democracy and representative democracy.

Successful participation

There are important questions about how to secure more and lasting resident participation and at the moment there are questions about what the appropriate vehicles are. Perhaps one of the paradoxes in Walker is the active and extensive networks of community and voluntary activity in contrast to the limited degree and nature of resident participation in the formal mechanisms of neighbourhood governance.

In one sense we are able to draw quite a positive picture of those already engaged in policy communities and some opening up to new actors, particularly in the third sector. But this is from a very low starting point and currently involves very small numbers of people, although this is slowly expanding. Hence these questions are very much up for debate.

The networks of residents have developed considerably after the initial problems with Going for Growth, which was followed by the city council's support for their development. An important moment in the evolution of resident involvement was the community network influencing the selection of the developer for the regeneration schemes. However, amongst most actors the language remains that of consultation. There are perhaps questions about how this could evolve into deeper levels of participation without more community activism and a break-down of some of the political tensions.

As previously stated the main formal mechanisms of involvement have been the ward committee structures and to a lesser extent the area committees. However whilst some regard the ward committees as the 'life blood' of the neighbourhood connecting city council and community, others recognise that their role at the moment is fairly limited. The future of the ward committees is currently under review.

One officer said that he felt that the ward committees had been 'usurped' by the growth of residents groups and associations supported by the community development workers. Another felt that you had to be quite knowledgeable to engage with the ward committee structure, which made it hard for the residents to participate. However, according to one officer, a new chair of the ward committee has attempted to open out the meetings.

Some members of the community commented that the ward committee was somewhere you went if you wanted to get some project funding. Other activists used the ward committee and area committee structures as places where they could have some kind of surveillance over governance matters and so be able to hold the elected members to account. One version of this was the comment made by one community activist who said, 'I go to the meetings just to rattle their (the councillors) cages'.

Tension between representative and participatory democracy

A recurring theme of the research has been the ongoing tensions between representative and participative democracy. The existence of the community networks, in particular the Walker and Riverside Network, are held up as a major achievement in the neighbourhood. But, there is also a sense that there is a tension between the community forums and the elected councillors who are perceived as being reluctant to share their power and give up the diminishing control which they have.

The ascendancy of community mobilisation is at turns both supported and applauded by the elected representatives as an important change in the neighbourhood and undermined through recurrent retreating into the old political regime. Under these circumstances it is hard for the community networks to know where they stand and how much credence their voice is being given. For some professionals there was concern about the degree to which they had prior and full knowledge of city council led changes and the extent to which they felt able to communicate freely with the local residents. An added dimension was that some ward councillors were under even greater threat through ward boundary changes – and it was felt that some had nothing to lose by making some protests about the loss of their power, which was being manifested in different and sometimes obstructive ways. This was balanced on the other hand by the feeling that some elected representatives had really tried hard to engage with the community at a deeper level and were much more actively supporting models of participatory democracy than was sometimes realised or acknowledged by community members.

It was not clear where a more comfortable balance might lie between community networks, elected members and officers and how this would evolve. It was also unclear what mechanisms would be more appropriate to support more engagement with, for example, young people and ethnic minorities.

Hence the participation of residents is in some ways fairly limited through the formal mechanisms of local and neighbourhood governance. What is both an established and emerging feature of the neighbourhood is what is described as *informal mechanisms*.

A relatively small number of residents are involved in community networks. They are seen as a hardcore of activism. They have been vocal in raising the concerns of the residents, by objecting to the redevelopment plans for the area. As one Pottery Bank activist said:

People here are dead against being moved off this estate.

There is, however, a concern amongst some of the workers, especially those directly involved in the Going for Growth process, that they are not getting a full and accurate picture. For example, Places for People feel that they have been unable to get a wider sense of how people in Pottery Bank would respond to the option of being able to move off the estate and into new housing. Despite the activists trying to get a broader range of residents to come to Going for Growth meetings, this has been of limited success. Places for People proposed a door to door survey to try and get a wider range of opinions. An activist suggested that there would need to be a person from the community going round with them to make sure that

answers were recorded faithfully, reflecting quite a strong degree of mistrust about the process. The survey which was conducted between May and June 2003, achieved a very low response rate from the residents of Pottery Bank. There remains little sense of the aspirations, if any, that the local residents have.

There seems to be a growing recognition of the resident networks' importance, which brings some difficulties as well – mainly the danger of over-exploitation. The networks involve around 250 residents, with a core of 15-20 activists and network representatives. The East End Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (EECVSF) acts as a strategic umbrella for community networks and third sector organisations. A small number of core activists are trying to engage at an East End level, an intermediate level and at their own estate or street level. Meanwhile, the pressures for community consultation across different aspects of governance means they are a target group for people wanting an easy snap-shot of neighbourhood opinions.

A new structure is created through Monkchester and Walker Partnership. As for the Community and Riverside Community Network, there seems to be an acknowledgement that potentially, at least, the network has quite a lot of clout. Its members have worked together well, which has been strengthened through 'away days'. Some fear that they may have created an institution that has grown too powerful, though some are fully supportive. As one interviewee said, 'They've created a monster'.

Overall, although vehicles and opportunities for engagement have grown significantly, some feel that the community is still reluctant to take responsibility. Others feel that the networks have become too strong and threaten to change the balance of power and could block the regeneration process.

The result is a tension between creating and nurturing resident networks and being worried about their power, at the same time being proud of community networks and wanting to control them. This creates a tension between social capital and political capital.

8.5 Developing capacity

As a long standing and relatively strong community, the area has social capital that can be considered as its inherent capacity. The way this can be developed as a capacity for people to get engaged in the affairs of the community, however, has not been sufficiently explored.

Capacity can be developed at an individual as well as collective level. While education and training can help individuals in developing their own capacity for integration, the arrangement of forums for collective communication and action are significant. The latter requires a series of small and tangible issues and projects to bring people together. It may also require some institutional framework to support this coming together of people, although this is not always the case. When the scale of the project is large and the timescale long, with a large degree of uncertainty, as with Going for Growth, the development of capacity can be seriously limited, as people cannot see how they can influence the shape of future.

In addition to the individual and group level of building capacity, it is significant to see how the organizations involved need to develop their capacity, both at an individual level and the relationship between them. The arenas that help these relationships develop, as well as the internal collaboration among the different sections of the organization are significant.

Developing capacity amongst residents has been a mixed process. Community workers and voluntary groups have in the wake of Going for Growth, taken some steps to get in external facilitators with the intention of developing community capacity. This has met with a degree of ambivalence by some officers and elected representatives.

The community development team supported a project to provide training through the national organisation the Community Development Foundation with the councillors agreeing to fund the training at the cost of £3k for people wanting to sit on committees. This demonstrates a

commitment from the city council. For some community members there is a sense that this has been a long time in coming. At one residents meeting, the chair was helped in the protocol by one of the community development workers and although a minor incident reflected a disparity between the officers and the community representatives and denies the latter an equal footing in the setting of formal meetings.

The away-day events planned for the community around Going for Growth have involved all the partners getting together to talk in a setting away from the neighbourhood. However one resident/ professional recounted how at one he attended in autumn 2002, there were 11 facilitators and only 9 residents.

There has been much talk and little action on getting training for community representatives. Community representatives feel they would like the opportunity to have some training but are frustrated at the delays in the delivery.



Some of the most innovative capacity building has been brought about through residents themselves, for example on Hexham Avenue and The Cambrian Estate. On the Cambrian the community have built themselves a planning for real model of how the estate could be redeveloped. Also some residents on the Cambrian have begun to train for their youth work certificate after the informal play sessions which have been help for the kids on the estate over the summer months.

Fig 6 A model built by residents of the Cambrian showing how they would like their estate to change

An important question which remains is whether, even where resident capacity has developed, this will combine with significant opportunities for them really to engage with neighbourhood governance processes and influence the nature of future changes.

8.6 Role of activists and 'spiders'

Walker is an area with a history of activism, both within the tradition of industrial work and unionism, and the more informal links among families and personal relationships. The advent of Going for Growth, however, has seen the rise of a new wave of activists who are involved in community networks. They stand uneasily between residents and the professionals, as both groups see them playing a simultaneously useful and suspicious role. For residents, they can help to represent their concerns and help articulate a voice. However, their position is very precarious as they can also be seen with suspicion, as to whether they can speak for others and whether they represent everyone's concerns. For professionals, they help legitimize the presence of the resident voice in the decision making process, but they too can look at them with suspicion if they are seen to have too much power or promote unconventional outcomes.

The role of spiders and activists is important in the situations where the gap between the state and local residents is wide. They can work as lubricants in a system that is not functioning smoothly. But a lack of institutionally recognized roles makes their situation precarious. It is essentially the problem of legitimacy that this uncertainty, according to a local councillor, leads to.

'Every community has their key activists who go along to every event, it has got to be admired, it would stagnate without them but most people don't want to attend regular meetings'.

Community spiders have also put themselves at risk. Whilst they have made huge commitment to their community, some of them can recount being subject to intimidation and verbal and physical abuse by other people on the estate. It was felt that this was often by young people who resented someone trying to bring more social control onto the estate or as one person put it 'trying to tell people what to do'.

Some of the activists interviewed reported feeling quite isolated and exhausted. They were frustrated by the lack of support they received from their neighbours – who seemed quite willing to enjoy the parties or trips but wouldn't themselves contribute any time or energy – even if they were unemployed. Where conflicts of interest arose they could be dispiriting and exhausting.

This core of community activists are seen as playing both a positive and negative role. Sometimes there was a sense that there was a gap between some of these activists and the rest of the community. Also, one youth worker felt that one individual who was a member of many networks was unsupportive of young people.

The core activists who have been fighting to save their community are also in some respects under scrutiny from the master-planners who are asking whether they reflect the feelings and opinions of those they live amongst. There is a feeling that the dominance of some spider people has meant that there may be a significant group of silent residents who are less happy with their current circumstances and have less stake in the communities in which they live. It has been suggested that once given the opportunity to move, some of this group will jump at the opportunity. Therefore getting a fair and accurate view of people's feelings is an issue of some contention in the neighbourhood at the moment and there are concerns that some community spider people are skewing local opinion and that there are alternative views which need somehow to be captured. In part to address these issues, some residents in the Walker Riverside area have been asked to complete a questionnaire about their aspirations for the future, but being able to get a new perspective on people's opinions has been difficult where there has been a very low response rate.

Places for People and the city council believe that the process is now much more in tune with the community than it was at the beginning – however on both sides there seems to be a fatigue. For community residents and voluntary groups, there is a sense of having to re-tell their stories over and over again. This might suggest scope for a more formal acknowledgment of the alternative stories other than the dominant city council one, such as suggested by Sandercock's agitation model (2000). For the Going for Growth professionals there seems to be a growing impatience with the community and their insistence on recounting their grievances; under these circumstances it makes it very difficult to move the process on.

8.7 Dealing with conflict

Sites of open conflict are quite limited. More prominent are the build-up of tensions across a number of different aspects of neighbourhood life. In a sense there is a lot of effort going into trying to prevent conflict breaking out. This does not address, however, the underlying processes which are producing the tensions.

Between residents

The diversity of interests and groups creates the possibility of conflict among different factions. These include conflict between different age groups, particularly among the youth and the rest of the community. One of the most obvious sites of conflict is over young people in the neighbourhood. However many of the people who identified youth as a problem saw it as a lack of resources and facilities for young people rather than the youth per se being the problem. Young people themselves reported feeling frustrated with some of the elder residents, especially when kicking a ball about was seen as such a problem.

A new conflict that is potentially emerging is among ethnic groups, especially after the arrival of relatively large numbers of asylum seekers. Even between different ethnic and cultural

groups conflict may emerge. The Asylum Seekers Unit deals with reports of racism and there have been some conflicts and tensions around race in the East End. However in general officers felt that the problems had been minimal and that where there were problems this often stemmed from the perceptions of young people. Under the NASS programme, for example, asylum seekers move into furnished local authority accommodation, making some residents angry believing that the new residents are being given items of furniture. Other rumours within the neighbourhood are that the asylum seekers are given mobile phones or money towards buying a car.

Other young people have talked about hating the racism within their community. One incident in the neighbourhood two years ago involved an empty housing scheme being set fire to twice when there was a proposal to use it to re-house asylum seekers. One officer said that the incident was especially sickening because older residents had encouraged some young people to carry out the arson. One youth worker commented:

There's a lot of very bad feeling towards asylum seekers. We try and challenge it – but there's a perception that they get this and that. I've been in the shopping centre at lunch-time when there's been real nasty feeling...and verbal comments, nasty verbal comments.

In fact, although racism is seen as an important local issue many of the youth projects are engaged in confronting racism both through their everyday practices and in terms of more formalised awareness-raising. One aspect of this is allowing young people to explore their own family histories where perhaps members of their own families, grandparents and great-grandparents formed the new immigrant population in Walker. There have also been attempts to try to encourage young asylum seekers and their families into the projects. One example of this is at Kids Kabin where some of the mothers from refugee families have come into the projects to do cookery demonstrations. The YMCA wants to do more of this type of work and identified their Byker office as having achieved quite considerable success over the short-term through door knocking in that neighbourhood.

Common Ground is an important project for supporting asylum seekers and refugees in the neighbourhood. The project officially opened its building in the Churchwalk shopping centre in May 2003, but has been operating since 2002. This project has found that racism has been an issue in the neighbourhood. However the importance of working closely with individuals in the local community, to try and build bridges has been emphasised. This one on one approach of slowly trying to shift attitudes through positive events and meetings takes considerable effort and time, however it is felt that this is the only meaningful and lasting way to approach the issue of how different people can come to understand and even support one another.

In our previous report we emphasised the wider issue of anti-social behaviour in Walker. This remains a key problem mostly being addressed through the Multi-Agency Partnership (MAPS) structure which has built up strong relations between the housing department and the city council. For residents themselves, there has been a growth in the local neighbourhood watch schemes supported by the local community beat officer. However, some residents believe that disciplinary governance has all but been eroded and people know the system and that they can get away with criminal or anti-social acts. Because of this there is now in some parts of the neighbourhood a desire to police their own houses and streets through surveillance equipment.

The growth in importance of 'cheap and nasty' heroin in the neighbourhood over the past 3-4 years is seen as one reason for the exacerbation of anti-social behaviour – despite a major drugs raid in 2002 which led to a number of arrests in the Monkchester ward.

If regeneration processes are successful in mixing the population in social and economic terms, it could also lead to conflict among the socio-economic groups. Finally, according to Imrie and Raco (2003:6) government through community is likely to lead to new social divisions between those considered as competent/active citizens and those who are not (Rose 1996:335).

Between residents and city council

It could be argued that the lack of opportunities for open and honest discussion within both the formal and informal settings, neighbourhood governance tends to accentuate the role of the neighbourhood as a setting for rumour and myth. There are some very powerful stories around the Going for Growth process and the telling of these stories is an important repertoire in trying to make external people understand the community perspective. Whilst these stories illustrate grievances and frustrations they are also about celebration of themselves as communities and their successes in being able to shift city council opinion and secure positive outcomes for the community. However, some people have also remarked that in the re-telling these stories have acquired more poignancy than the original events. In one way this could be seen as allowing a sense of injustice and maltreatment to be sustained. It now forms an important dimension of local emotional capital, but is seen by some as creating blockages in the process of moving ahead with the Going for Growth strategy. In some sense the renaissance approach increases the potential for tension between residents and the authorities as places become labelled as inactive, dependent or deviant (Imrie and Raco 2003).

Going for Growth and conflict

There is a degree of emerging conflict over whether the city council should have contracted Places for People (PFP) for the master-planning process. The recent land sale of a site adjacent to the riverside has led to some misgivings over letting the process out of the hands of the city council. However as one community worker suggested if the city council were to ditch the developer which was the preferred choice of the community then relations between the community and city council would deteriorate to a significant degree. This is compounded by the recent securing of contracts to build aircraft carriers on the Tyne which harks back to the strength of the working class and of Labour politics in Walker.

However, the land sale which has caused this unrest serves to emphasise how fragile the shift from representative to more participatory modes of democracy is. Whilst some of the old political powers are undoubtedly gone for good, there is this new context of riverside land values and ship-building which rekindles what remains of old political institutions and practices.

Owner-Occupiers in the Riverside area and particularly along Walker Road are very aggrieved at the likely demolition. As one professional remarked:

They are completely up in arms about it...there aren't that many of them – but they are completely upset by the whole thing.

PFP have been trying to work with members of this group to say that that they are trying to protect and build up the other tenures, especially owner-occupancy – but have not yet been able to convince the owner-occupiers group that the outcomes could be positive for them.

Responsibility gaps

Across the board there are tensions about different actors failing to take responsibility. A recent example of this was at the ALMO road show where an attempt by city council officers to talk through the proposals in housing management was met with some cynicism by local residents who were frustrated at not being able to get repairs done on their homes. A woman resident from one of the multi-story blocks recounted how she had held her tenancy for 14 years and had never had her windows cleaned because the council had never contracted anyone to do it.

From another perspective one councillor expressed the view that local residents were too dependent on the city council to sort out problems. He commented:

'residents have to realise they have responsibilities too'

In a sense this echoes one of the grievances of the community activists - that they are not supported by other members of their own community and there have even been a couple of

incidences of outright hostility (e.g. stone throwing). They find this difficult to understand when they feel as though they are putting in a lot of effort for the greater good of the community.

Similarly some actors involved in Going for Growth are frustrated with the local residents for not getting on board with the proposals when they have been critical of their neighbourhood and the way that it has been governed. As one regeneration worker said,

'A lot of people are recognising that they've spent years criticising their own area – and criticising how it was run. Should they really be looking at this as an opportunity?'

Another worker commented:

'Nobody really wants anyone coming in with a master-plan to change the area. But...this is actually an opportunity to have a say in what happens – that's the sort of stance we've taken. Bring the city council, developers and community together and at least get them talking to each other.'

Conversely it could be said that it is the tenacity of a small number of individuals who have sought and succeeded in raising the profile of the community interests. However it is also not entirely clear what type of opportunities are being offered to residents to be able to shape the future plans for their neighbourhood.

8.8 Overcoming obstacles

Communication difficulties

One major obstacle lies in the communication mechanisms between different actors involved in neighbourhood governance. One interviewee has argued that a difficult political culture has meant that sometimes officers have been afraid to engage fully and frankly with the elected members to keep them informed and in the loop. However, one officer working in the neighbourhood said that they felt that sometimes relationships with the community were not as good as they could be – because they were not allowed to be as open and honest as they would like. This partly reiterates comments made in the previous round of the research about not being able to get a clear line from the city council down to people in the neighbourhood. Amongst some local residents there was a very strong feeling that they were not being given the full picture and this both angered and frustrated them. The culture of drip-feeding information to the community seems a fairly established barrier.

Formal governance mechanisms are not well understood by many people and do not, at the moment, offer a very useful basis for expanding the quality and quantity of communication. Recent events have led to more participatory approaches being introduced but the loss of elected members' power and control can make it difficult for them to embrace this change. There is an uncomfortable shifting around the balance of these relations and an uncertainty about how it will stabilise. As a local worker put it:

'Many people in this community feel that the city council doesn't listen anyway – so what is the point, why bother asking when at the end of the day they do what they want.'

Where there is a lack of clear and open debate, stories of protest accumulate. In turn these can become mythology as their importance increases, as resentment becomes more ingrained. Until these embedded feelings of anger are given a setting to be heard and acknowledged, then it seems likely that the lines of communication will remain untangled.

'It's about control and power – after nearly 3 ½ years, you get very impatient with those who don't know the story and it becomes very wearing telling the story again'

and again and again.there comes a point when you say I just can't cope going back through this anymore.'

Thus the other side of the coin is that people have to let go of issues and concerns and injustices that then pass through the decision-making processes - the alternative voice is worn down through a process of attrition. According to a local worker:

'There is an issue of control and power – because obviously if you're all there and know the story, it's much more difficult but it's much more genuine,... you work through the history...but you don't have the energy and time to spend the hours and hours at meeting...and local people lose control.'

Places for People are attempting to engage in a much more 'on the ground way' of working – linking up formally to the community development team – one member of which has been seconded to work with Places for People. The intention is to deepen the community development approach by taking on new staff to work on the detail with individual communities, but after 2-3 years people remain unclear as to what is going to be happening, which has created a lot of anxiety. Places for People recognise this and in some ways are itching to get on with things – but know they need to take the community and council with them. In some senses they are becoming the mediators of relationships between the city council and some local residents – yet at the same time their own position has been uncertain.

The barriers in terms of getting young people to engage at any level are significant. They feel excluded in many ways and

'...what makes a young person feel more engaged and part of their community may have nothing whatsoever to do with formal or even informal adult participatory models -whether that be an informal resident group or through the ward community structure.'

Moreover there is a sense that although there is a wide and active range of agencies, young people are becoming more difficult to work with. As a youth worker complains,

'I've worked here for 12 years, and I feel it's harder now, the kids are less responsive to you when you do the street work than they were say 10 years ago. I think there's much more...I just think it's harder – it takes a longer process to try and engage with them and get them to respond to you.'

A different youth worker, also with a long history of working in the neighbourhood, commented that they found young people 'more aggressive' – especially over the past couple of years:

'Aggressive responses are really noticeable amongst young people now. They can't even be civil with the simplest of things... and with each other....The terminology they use, the language, basically aggressive. A lot of the time we break through that but you understand how people feel threatened.'

Street work by different agencies is proving one slow but important route into making contact with some of the youngsters, including those whose reputation goes before them.

There is widespread recognition that young people are poorly catered for in the neighbourhood. This does not mean, however, that some people are not willing to demonise them. Professionals working with young people recognise that there is dwindling trust. Whilst typically this is seen often as a problem of young males – some see young mothers as a vulnerable group who do not currently receive much support. Previously one of the play workers worked voluntarily in the evenings in Walker Park – and there was a feeling that she offered a significant support structure for young people. She is now working in a different part of the city following an OFSTED inspection of the service. One of the lessons to be learnt from the approach was that she was available in the place where young people went. This

kind of informal access was clearly valued by some people and seen as problematic by others – but it did provide another opportunity for young people to engage.

The idea that participation must be formalised tends to represent a cultural bias and an exclusive form of neighbourhood governance. For young people formalised processes e.g. regular meetings and role-taking may not be appealing or appropriate. Hence rather than recognising formalised processes and wishing to see these enhanced as suggested by elected members and community development workers, it may be more appropriate to get more diverse and fluid participation events. At the moment there seems little recognition that there are many different kinds of ways in which people feel able or want to contribute to neighbourhood governance. A more democratic approach would recognise this by valuing different approaches and styles of integration and participation.

Thus obstacles to creating new, more inclusive governance are significant. Because the context is complex and the situation changing, it can be difficult to take people with you when the direction is unsure. Under such circumstances it might be argued that leadership is a problem.

8.9 Fighting stigma

The neighbourhood reputation

For residents, activists and officers, the neighbourhood of Walker has a reputation. The perception is that people from other parts of the city think that Walker is a rough place. And residents themselves talked about particular estates and streets in the neighbourhood as being rough places, places they wouldn't go at night. One life-long resident commented, '*Walker has always been a hard place*'. In early 2002, a high profile drugs raid identified parts of the adjoining Monkchester ward as a key location for drug dealers.

The issue of stigma is really important. Although we have said Walker is not one uniform place – but individual streets and estates, it has a reputation in the rest of the city. The whole rationale of Going for Growth is predicated on the view that the neighbourhood is failing and that conditions will only worsen unless radical action is taken. The solution proposed is therefore that a new owner-occupying middle class is needed to drag Walker up. There is therefore a dilemma about how to attract people in and develop owner occupancy.



Fig 7 Walker Riverside – poor quality, vandalised public space is a problem

The tension between two images

To gain access to funds for regeneration, the neighbourhood is portrayed as a problem area. This may be needed as a necessary step to take to overcome the problems of the neighbourhood. This emphasis, however, adds to the problem of the area's poor image, stigmatizing it further. This creates a tension that cannot be easily overcome.

Celebration of the neighbourhood

Celebratory events are important for addressing stigma. The neighbourhood has had some events that have been important celebratory events – the major one being Walker Park Festival. Due to resource cut-backs, the whole standing of Walker Park and its ability to host celebrations have been undermined. That has sent out messages to people that the neighbourhood is declining, although there are now plans for a major overhaul of this major public space. The whole Going for Growth approach also has at its core the message that the area is failing.

However, new forms of celebration have emerged as a direct result of regeneration plans. On the Cambrian Estate, for example, the residents group which mobilised against the threat of demolition has found a new spirit of community. They have had now held a Christmas Party,

a Jubilee Street Party and have had trips away for the children of the estate as well as setting up play sessions on open green space during the summer months. They have supported themselves through fund-raising on the estate as well as getting some financial support from the city council. Whilst these new activities have not been problem free, the community are justifiably proud of their achievements, also acknowledged by housing and community



development officers, Places for People and the local councillors. However there is also an underlying sense that the people of the Cambrian feel they have needed to demonstrate their strength through these events so that the city council realise that they want some say in the future of their area.

Fig 8 Jubilee Celebrations on the Cambrian

9. Analysing Neighbourhood Governance

9.1 Pressures and tensions

The general picture of governance in the neighbourhood shows a series of actions and institutions that have emerged in response to the acute problems of economic transition and social exclusion. This has made the neighbourhood governance a site of *tensions*: between outside forces and inside groups, and between different individuals and groups within the neighbourhood. These tensions have arisen partly as a result of external pressures on the neighbourhood to reform, and have led to the development of new arenas and institutions, which, it is hoped, can facilitate this reform. One aspect of this outside pressure is for economic revitalization. Bringing the neighbourhood's land and labour back to the marketplace is a major preoccupation in the reform process.

A pressure for bringing *land* back to the market began in the city centre, and is now extending to the peripheral areas. The city of Newcastle, like other cities in Britain, has been a site of major new urban regeneration and property development schemes. The development pressure has particularly been high along the riverside, where a new Gateshead Millennium Bridge, a new arts centre, The Baltic, and a new music centre and concert hall have been the new additions to the two-decade-long process of waterfront regeneration. Earlier, the law court, new offices, hotels and restaurants had been built along the quayside. These schemes have provided the basis for the development of new private housing schemes with expensive flats on the riverside and the redevelopment a site adjoining Walker – St Peter's Basin. Development pressure is now travelling along the river towards Walker, where the authorities are keen to invite developers to transform the shape of a stigmatized and increasingly underused area.

The pressure for bringing *labour* back to the market has been a more longstanding trend, ever since de-industrialization led to large scale unemployment. The area's population has dwindled due to people's departure to other areas in search of jobs and better quality of life. Those who remain are seen as marginalized from the market, continuing to use public subsidies and welfare assistance. This has been seen as undesirable by consecutive governments, who have tried to change this configuration so that the existing labour force can be utilized, hence increasing the pressure for welfare reform. However amongst non-workers there is a significant level of expertise around knowing their rights and being able to negotiate their share of the social wage.

These pressures form the underlying context within which relationships within the neighbourhood are undergoing a period of transformation. Traditional actors are mediating their relationships in new ways as new actors emerge and as new arenas and processes of negotiation are being established in the neighbourhood. Whilst there is a consensus that old forms of service provision and political management are no longer effective, shifting to new systems and practices is far from easy and there is something of a tension between the old and the new. One dimension to this is the shifting relations between local residents and formal institutions.

Relations between the residents and professional / agencies have traditionally been ones of dependence. Amongst residents there is something of a 'learned helplessness' – which has undermined the ability of people to be able to engage assertively in policy processes. This has however become increasingly fraught as the ability of the Council to provide services has declined and there is reduced demand for the existing council housing stock. Whilst residents, particularly the older ones, appear to have a strong allegiance to Walker as their home and their community, there are dissatisfactions with how the neighbourhood is managed. In particular there is a sense that residents feel that they have been abandoned by the city council. Tensions have been exacerbated by the lack of transparent communication between the city council and the residents of Walker. Yet given the economic conditions in the neighbourhood, it has been very difficult to forge new sets of governance relations, even as

the traditional sets of relations have faltered. At the moment there is a critical tension between the elected representatives, who have seen their powers within the city council eroded through the establishment of the cabinet style of political management and the resident activists who are seeking more equity in the dialogue with their political representatives.

A major tension in the relationship between residents and governing agencies has been the tendency to engage only in big, infrequent and difficult conversations rather than having many more, smaller conversations. Some of the newer initiatives such as the health project are leading the way in establishing alternative methods of working encouraging a different basis for relations between local residents and governance agencies.

Going for Growth, the City Council's strategy to the external pressures described above, aims for a wholesale regeneration of the area. Yet due to its external nature and the force with which it was put forward, it led to **resentment** and strong reactions from the neighbourhood residents. Feeling as though their homes and life patterns were threatened by the possibility of demolition and redevelopment, residents started to mobilize and protest against external interference in the neighbourhood life. This was a tension that developed between the neighbourhood and the outside agencies, adding to the long term feelings of abandonment and deprivation and causing potentially explosive conditions.

This threat has created an impetus for residents to become more organised, and, supported by local community development workers they have been able to make their voice heard in local decision-making processes. This signifies a change from the past in that local people now feel that to some extent they can exert some influence over what is happening in their neighbourhood. However, whilst there is a discernable shift in relationships between local people and the city council; this involves only a relatively small number of residents. Moreover, beyond those residents taking a direct role and interest in governance matters, there seems to be a lack of awareness of the Going for Growth process or at least an attitude that it has 'little to do with me'.

From our research it would seem that young residents remain very peripheral in decision-making about the future of the neighbourhood. Although some work is now being done through the youth out-reach service to try to rectify this situation, there is some pessimism that the formal consultation processes are going ahead without young people being actively engaged in a meaningful way. Only one of the young residents we interviewed had heard of Going for Growth, but did not know what it was about. The role of the growing number of asylum seekers now living in the neighbourhood also seems to be peripheral - this question needs further investigation.

Finally, some of the non-statutory organisations working in the neighbourhood found it difficult to keep up to date with what was happening in the neighbourhood. For some of them the existence of the Ward Committee meant that sometimes information did not filter out into the community in other ways. In some respects third sector organisations are in the background going about their business but are not linked to the formal processes of governance.

9.2 Problems in the Neighbourhood

Alongside the external pressures and tensions, internal pressures and tensions have been continuous. Unemployment may have been reduced and (to some extent) compensated by the social insurance and training schemes. The problems of **crime and anti-social behaviour**, however, have not been dealt with and seem to be beyond control, despite continuous efforts by the police and the government. This puts households at loggerhead with each other, as they blame each other for the problems that the youth behaviour creates. Whilst in some areas residents are seeking to act more collectively to try to address anti-social behaviour, it is clear that a culture of intimidation makes it very difficult for residents to be actively involved in the 'policing' of their own neighbourhood. It seems that a few people have been willing to put themselves in quite a vulnerable position to try to address these problems. However, they have expressed frustration that their efforts go unappreciated by

some (both officials and other residents) and concern that they are putting themselves and their families at some risk. This is perhaps a warning that there is not an unlimited stock of goodwill amongst the neighbourhood activists. Conversely, one of the officials interviewed felt that a well-known activist in the neighbourhood had behaved vindictively towards a group assumed to be troublemakers. In addition most residents felt that the police presence was inadequate to deal with the type of problems in the neighbourhood.

The analysis shows that the new pressures leave new **gaps**, or are unable to fill the old ones. For example, the Going for Growth strategy focuses on the redevelopment of the riverside and the revitalization of the Shields Road high street. This would not address the problems of **access to facilities** that much of the neighbourhood suffers from. Even though a new supermarket has been developed on Shields Road and despite some improvements in the neighbourhood's shopping centre, Church Walk, the choice of shopping venue for essential needs remains limited. The refurbished Shields Road is also beyond walking distance, in a neighbourhood with a large elderly population, where only a minority have access to a private car, and where public transport has been under pressure. Facilities for young people are very limited within the neighbourhood, and where these do exist the cost of using them can be prohibitive.

Whilst there has been restructuring in the provision of services, it seems that there is a lack of clarity over who is **responsible** for different aspects of neighbourhood management. The changes which are taking place are adding to a complex picture of governance. New interfaces will continue to develop between the neighbourhood and the city council through Places for People, the new arms length housing management organisation and through the Area Committees. As yet it is unclear what this means in terms of addressing the problems in the neighbourhood, but it is clear that this complexity in itself represents a challenge. At the moment however there is a certain amount of anger expressed by residents and activists that they have been left **vulnerable and isolated**.

Whilst there is a growing recognition of the need to involve local residents, this does not extend equally to all members of the population. There are long-standing concerns about how much of a voice the youth have in neighbourhood affairs. Hence there is a problem of people who don't feel integrated or are seen as having a legitimate stake in neighbourhood governance. Some of this feeds off a traditional culture of blame and dependency among some members of the community. In this context it can be difficult for community activists to play a role, engendering as it does an anti-authority stance.

One of the most apparent problems is the lack of support to a generation of young people who have little means of developing their self-esteem. Whilst the external manifestations of this are clear, the underlying issues are complex and deep-rooted. This implies that long-term strategic and holistic action is the only way forward.

9.3 Addressing Neighbourhood Problems

There are several dimensions to the handling of problems in the neighbourhood. First there are the general changes in political management and the growing importance of Ward and Area Committees as problem-solving forums from the city council perspective.

Then there is the overarching regeneration strategy of Going for Growth and an array of specific initiatives and projects. How well these different aspects of neighbourhood governance will co-operate or co-ordinate is still somewhat open. However, there has been a steady growth in networking, particularly across the statutory agencies.

Multi-agency working is now apparent in Walker, despite the past dominance of the local authority over affairs in the neighbourhood, which has meant that the development of new cultures is slow and sometimes painful. New networking practices are helping enable new approaches to problem solving, at the most basic level by allowing for information sharing.

Organisational innovations have been encouraged through the community development project, which has been pivotal in getting in a more formalised community voice in local policy processes. However, whilst this process has been attention-grabbing, there is a considerable amount of 'behind the scenes' community based service delivery and welfare support.

There is evidence of statutory authorities such as the police, housing and education sector as working much more across agencies and using new initiatives to try to tackle problems. Good examples of this are the Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, which housing management and police jointly enforce, and the Education Action Zone, which is bringing together the different schools in the neighbourhood.

9.4 Effectiveness of Present Arrangements

New institutional forums As a result of local government restructuring, some *new institutional forums* have emerged, in the form of Area and Ward Committees, which promise a new style of decision making that brings different stakeholders together. This infrastructure, however, is still in its infancy. The relations of power and responsibility between these different levels of authority are not yet clarified. The Ward, Area, and City-wide forums are set up to promote partnership between public, private and voluntary sectors with the local communities. It is, however, not clear how they divide the cross-cutting issues between themselves, how they establish forms of representation for different constituencies, and how overlaps can be addressed. Their durability and effectiveness have not yet been tested but there is a strong perception from those 'on the ground' that these structures do not provide an adequate basis from the development of interactive governance.

These new institutions are created in response to policy initiatives that have been developed at the national level by the central government and have been applied in the area. Together, they promote a new style of dealing with local issues that some have called a governance model. The style may be defined as one in which players and arenas of decision making are multiple, as distinctive from the previous periods in which the state was the only actor in the management of the urban and neighbourhood affairs.

The idea is now that actors from the public sector are joined by those from private businesses, voluntary organizations and community groups, to make decisions for the neighbourhood and implement them. It is argued that this will make it possible for fresh ideas and practices to emerge. Two major obstacles, however, can be identified in the way. First, the private sector does not have a home in the neighbourhood, i.e. the limited number of firms and businesses with a stake in the area. The state agencies hope to make the private firms interested in the area and attract them to invest here. There is so far no evidence of a strong interest by private firms. The only major interest is in the resources of the neighbourhood, its land, at its most desirable, which lies along the river.

Second, in a neighbourhood like Walker, where the residents are accustomed to being managed by the local government and by large scale employers, the possibility of meaningful participation by the public is limited. The introduction of the Going for Growth strategy has in some ways changed this - for a while at least. As a result of community mobilization against the threat of large scale redevelopment, new resident groups have emerged to ensure a degree of community participation in the neighbourhood governance. The multiplication of these consultative forums, however, does not mean a complete departure from the way resources are allocated or managed. Furthermore, there is a degree of exhaustion among the community activists, after a period of tension and heated activism, and due to the length of time over which any development may take place. The stock of trust within the neighbourhood is also quite fragile and needs to be reinforced. Since there is a limited amount of community development support, which is already stretched beyond capacity, the aim is to create self-sustaining community groups. Whilst much progress has been made in this direction, it is likely to be the case that the state of flux into which the neighbourhood has been thrust will mean continuing support will be important to sustain the community voice.

The limited length of regeneration initiatives and schemes often mean that any new neighbourhood governance arrangements would be short term and potentially ad hoc. Going for Growth promises to be a long-term strategy, going beyond short term funding rounds and achieving particular limited targets. At the same time, other agencies in governance, such as private firms and local residents, may not be able to cope with a long term strategy without clearly seeing how this would affect them and the future of their involvement.

The resistance of the community groups to Going for Growth has been a significant episode in the neighbourhood. The institutionalization of this resistance in the form of community groups and networks has created a new dimension to neighbourhood governance in the East End. How far this change is extended to the population at large or remains at the level of familiar faces of the neighbourhood activists is yet to be evaluated.

Where the participation of private firms and the local community is limited, the multitude of government agencies and schemes plus some charities are the only actors that seem to shape events and conditions in the area. If the new institutions of governance are effective in bringing all the possible stakeholders together and put in place the possibility of creating a collective actor out of these groups, it can be said that a new form of urban governance has emerged in the neighbourhood.

9.5 Developing Governance Arrangements

Residents views

The attitude of the small number of residents 'in the know' was 'wait and see' with regard to how current governance arrangements are unfolding on the ground. Whilst they are keen to reinforce the community role in local governance processes, the terrain of negotiation is still unclear and uncertain in the face of redevelopment pressures. The new developers Places for People have stressed the importance of working with local people and so far people are waiting to see to what extent this will be the case.

There was some scepticism about how much power was exercised at forums like the Ward Committee, where the residents are supposed to have a voice. There was also a sense of frustration that the residents' voice is somewhat peripheral at the level of Area Committee. As one activist remarked 'I go to rattle their (the councillors) cage'. Whilst the political perspective about the new structures was very positive, it seems as though some of the residents who have attempted to engage are yet to be convinced that it really represents a mechanism for two-way dialogue.

In general, amongst the non-active residents there were few suggestions as to how governance might develop, or little evaluation of the emergent relations. This perhaps reflects the traditional pattern of relations and dominance of the city council.

9.6 New Governance Arrangements

Re-setting Priorities and Re-thinking the Role and Structure of Professional Agencies

The focus of the research is on the question of whether governance arrangements can be improved to help combat social exclusion and promote integration. In the case of Walker the overarching theme is of a new and radical policy agenda which attempts to bring about greater inclusion through a redevelopment process which will lead to the emergence of a more mixed community. Such drastic action is required to combat a housing allocation policy which has served to reinforce social segregation. Whilst this is presented as the only possible future, it has been introduced in a manner which pays little heed to the character of the locality and its proud working class history – nor listens to community voices. This has led to tension and resentment. Under such circumstances it has not been possible simply to forge ahead with the Going for Growth strategy. There is now a period of consultation and reflection in which different voices are being given an opportunity to express their views. The outcome of this will become clearer in the coming months, but there is both a mixture of

optimism and cynicism amongst the practitioners and residents. Meanwhile the traditional policy cultures are also potentially being swept away through the forthcoming arms length housing management organisation and political management structures have also undergone major change. It appears that the elected representatives, some officers and residents have contrasting views on whether the new system is now working well. The current state of flux however, represents a moment in which governance arrangements are, to a degree, up for negotiation.

The Role of 'Spider' People and Informal Networks

The role of some of the traditional 'spider' people, those who have been at the centre of social networks, like local councillors, is being held up to question meanwhile active local residents are finding that their role has been elevated, through the support of community development workers. Whilst acknowledging that they have been a conduit for a community voice in decision-making processes, these 'spider' people have expressed some concern that they only represent a very small number of voices. So whilst they and the informal networks which surround them may be well-embedded in the community, they may not extend beyond a street or a project. Other 'spider' people are very well known with their families having a history of activism in the community, but they may still feel as though their representative base is quite narrow. Other 'spider' people, such as some of those working through the Thomas Gaughan centre or youth out-reach workers have a far-reaching impact, but are not necessarily well-known in the wider community. The stock of social capital represented by traditional spider people is however likely to be a shrinking asset. Many of the more influential characters in the neighbourhood are the product of Trade Union activism – many of the younger residents are not acquiring these types of skills. A further issue is that whilst voluntary action is important within the community, there can still be a suspicion of people who are seen to be engaging with authority. At the extreme this has led to two activists being physically attacked whilst out on the streets.

The Linking of Formal and Informal Networks

Linking the formal and informal networks together is a challenging task. Where linkages have been forged this has mainly been around the Going for Growth process and in the new Area and Ward committee structures of the city government. However both in Going for Growth and around the new political structures, the relationship between the everyday and the strategic remains difficult to bridge. This is especially the case where resource allocation is still centralised, curbing the scope for local autonomy.

9.7. New institutions of governance

This report has highlighted the major and ongoing changes in the way that the neighbourhood is being managed. In some cases this is leading to questions over the existing formal mechanisms. The growth of informal mechanisms has been a key feature of change in the character of neighbourhood governance over the past couple of years. However, the existing patterns of old political frameworks and relations remain and are given momentum by uncertainty. There is also increasing complexity derived through the Going for Growth process and through changes in city council policy delivery and political management. What is clear is that this period of major transition will continue. What is also clear is that the future of the neighbourhood will be intricately linked with changing institutions of governance.

Comments were made regarding tensions over the local structure for the LSP. During our last round of interviews the EEP management was hoping that it could reinvent itself to take on neighbourhood renewal functions – this now looks much less certain.

'We don't know what the future, the depth of change that local strategic partnerships will bring. How will the council deal with having this new body around? What will the LSP area structures be? They have an overhead and it used to say in the area structures bit

area committees or regeneration structures, it now has 'to be decided' because there is a bit of a battle going on between area committees and other sorts of structures. It will have a very local affect – the area structure and how people get on to it....'

However, amongst some third sector interviewees there was a sense that the city council are hoping to see a version of the Area Committees as the area structures for the city-wide strategic partnership. There is a feeling that the Outer East Area Committee Going for Growth Advisory Group – currently dominated by councillors - may be being pushed towards being that vehicle.

'I think the city council is hoping that on paper ... it will look like a partnership and so it will become the area structure.'

However amongst some practitioners there is scepticism that these existing structures can be made to work effectively.

More progress needs to be made concerning the specific delivery vehicles around Going for Growth. The intention is to retain the value of any redevelopment within the area. The aim eventually is to be able to transfer surpluses into a Community Trust Vehicle (CTV). The CTV should start with the community but this will be something that will begin to take shape over the long-term and be agreed with the city council.

In general one of the perceived problems is the way that possible new institutional structures seem to 'slip' around (for example the morphing from Walker Riverside Advisory Group, loaded onto area committee and then slipping into the Going for Growth Advisory Group). However discussions about the institutional structures themselves are currently a source of tension; according to a voluntary sector worker,

'Where can you have the sensible discussions without knowing whether the answer has been decided in advance?'

10. Concluding comments

The analysis of governance in Walker shows a number of trends and offers some significant lessons.

The mere creation of a forum for communication is not enough, as participation in the forum requires characteristics that all may not have, especially the socially excluded residents.

Establishment of new institutions may not be enough. They need to be accessible to all actors. Particularly in the case of the socially excluded, the atmosphere, the language of communication, and the type and attitude of people present may generate a sense of alienation. If a forum is created to include all, then extra measures need to be put in place to make sure inclusion happens, by providing not only access to the forum but also access to information and the mechanisms of participation in the activities that go on in the forum, and using these in actual decision making processes.

Some activities, such as community development work, may develop capacities for some socially excluded residents to get involved in neighbourhood affairs. This, however, needs coordinating with other stakeholders, to prevent mismatch and disappointment. So there is a need to ensure that the political representatives of the people are also put in the framework. Otherwise, community development potentially becomes a bridge between experts and residents, bypassing the media, the politicians, and other stakeholders.

The desire to establish horizontal connections across different sectoral divisions needs to be accompanied with a stronger degree of devolution. If area-based institutions and policies are established, then recognition and mobilization of all actors should be the main task, rather than performing the same sectoral tasks through a new channel.

The horizontal rearrangement of functions for better integration needs to be in line with a new vertical division of labour. If the two are put in contrasting positions, then horizontal integration cannot effectively take place. In Newcastle, it appears that the area-based forums have been established in parallel with an enhancement of a vertical intervention. The subdivision of the council into cabinet and backbencher has potentially created a new vertical layer in the hierarchy, increasing the distance between the decision making processes and the local communities. The establishment of local area committees has not been able to bridge this widening gap. Therefore, the establishment of a new forum per se is not the answer to the problems of governance in the neighbourhood; it needs to be supported by a new division of powers at vertical and horizontal levels.

Participation can only make sense when the end result is not finalized, and so people feel they can influence the outcome. When the fear and mistrust builds up, the normal professional pressures of deadlines and contractual obligations can only exacerbate the element of mistrust.

Going for Growth is a strategic plan for redeveloping Walker with a more diverse social mix. Alongside this deliberative top-down attempt to manipulate the local population make-up is a largely unplanned shift in the population base occurring through the arrival of new migrants to the neighbourhood. They arrive in the North East and in Walker as part of central government's dispersal policy. It is too early to assess the implications of this change – the shifts in relations and what it means for the neighbourhood – but what is clear this process is having an impact on the cultural, religious, ethnic make-up of the local population. Thus far little attention seems to be paid to this aspect of diversification.

In retrospect, the City Council are aware that they have opened themselves up to criticism over the handling of urban renaissance policies for the neighbourhood. Yet, the hugely emotive threat of demolition has proved in some ways to be an important catalyst for community mobilisation. The need to defend aspects of community life will however be in some tension with the 'new realism' perspective behind Going for Growth. However, what is

clear is that although the process has been a catalyst it has also eroded the limited stock of trust in the authorities which exists in the neighbourhood. The loss of trust means that maintaining meaningful dialogue between the community and the City Council is likely to be a time-consuming and sometimes difficult process. For some residents the council is simply the dead hand of bureaucracy which hinders local innovation and reduces further the credibility of the policy makers.

It seems likely that the issues which come up for negotiation and the way they are handled will be influenced by a number of mediators including the Community Co-ordinator, Places for People and the Community Development Workers. They seem critically placed to support negotiation between the City Council decision-makers and the local community. Bringing in external developers, whose selection has depended upon the community vote, may help to pave the way for more open relationships but it is still too early to assess this.

One important lesson which has emerged is that it is very difficult for people to begin to play an active role in local governance processes or even to take them very seriously when daily life is about survival. However, what has also emerged is that even when people have relatively stable lifestyles, taking governance seriously is difficult when the quality of their homes and living environment is poor, the funding priorities do not match their expectations and needs, and the authorities are seen to be themselves not in full control.

Some of the most significant challenges for neighbourhood governance arise most crucially over questions about communal life. The policy makers must get to grips with questions about how to provide an effective framework to support local social relations. Anti-social behaviour, vandalism and petty crime were perhaps the features which were highlighted most frequently as affecting the quality of life – and eroding community bonds. No matter what structures were set up residents did not gain any control in this area and moreover felt let down by the agencies whose responsibility it was.

Innovative changes in neighbourhood life also seem to be hampered by an unwillingness to let the community vision seep through – there is always another agenda which is allowed to dominate mainly centred on external economic pressures. It seems that one agenda must make room for the other – that re-building cannot be diverse and piecemeal and based around the desires of the existing community.

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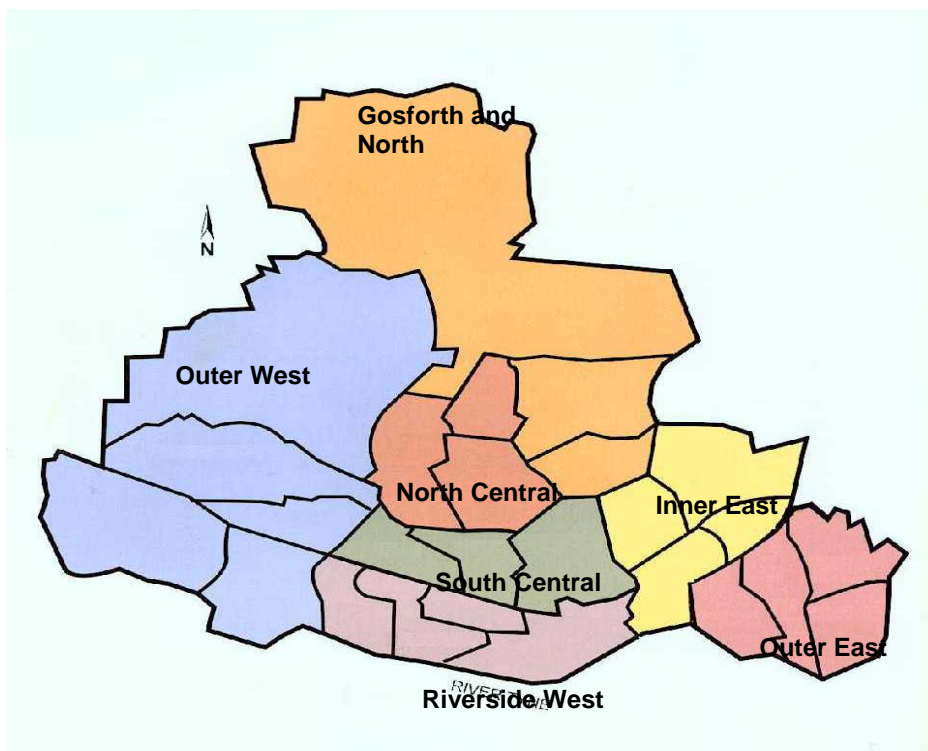
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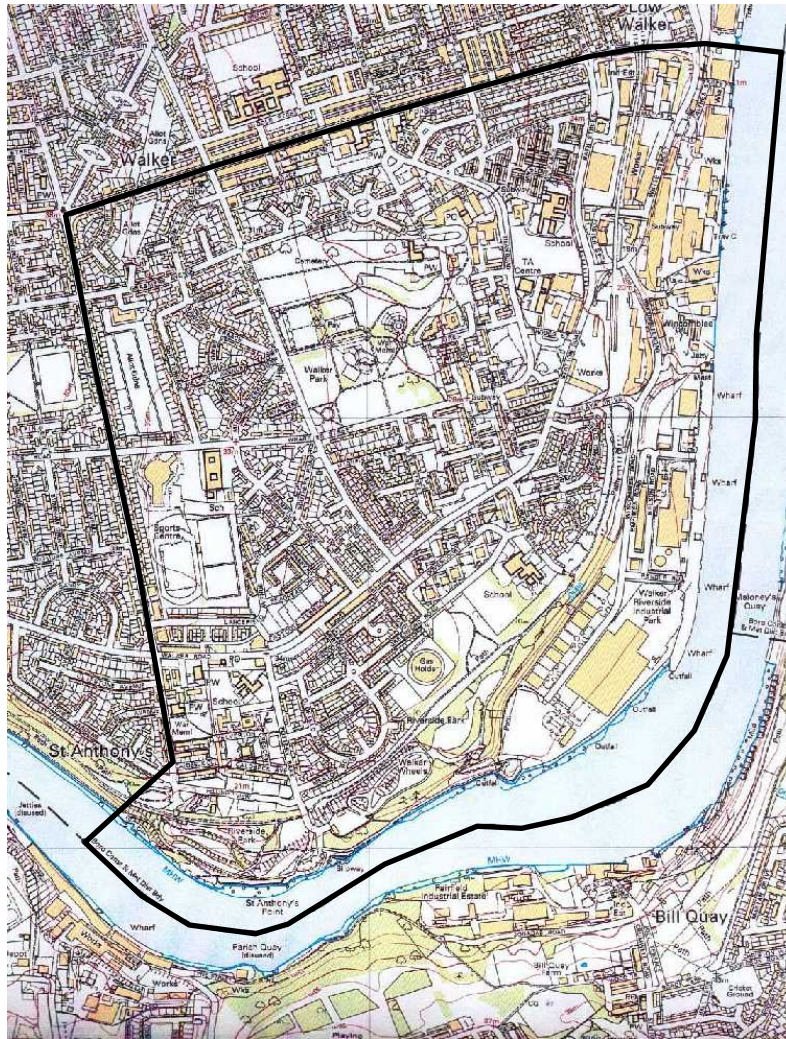
1. Walker Location Map



2. Community Planning Areas in Newcastle



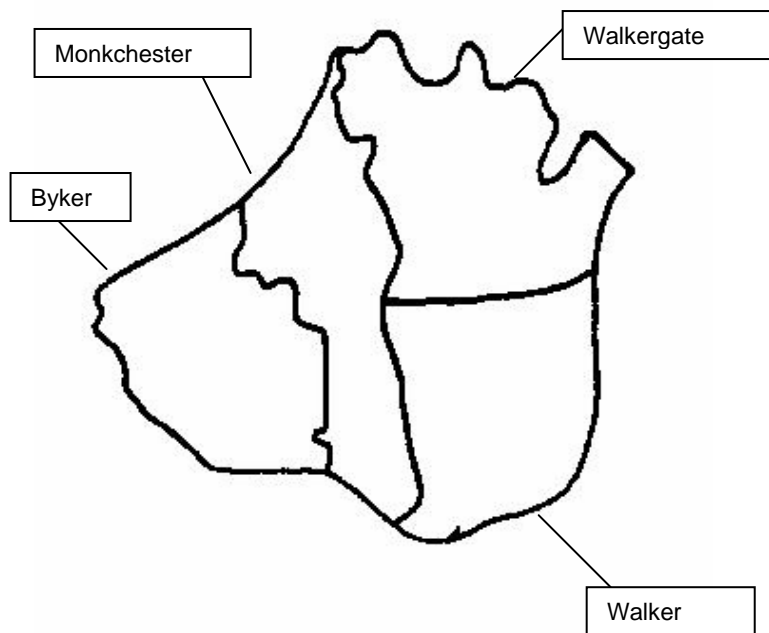
3. A Map Showing the Walker Ward (pre June 2004)



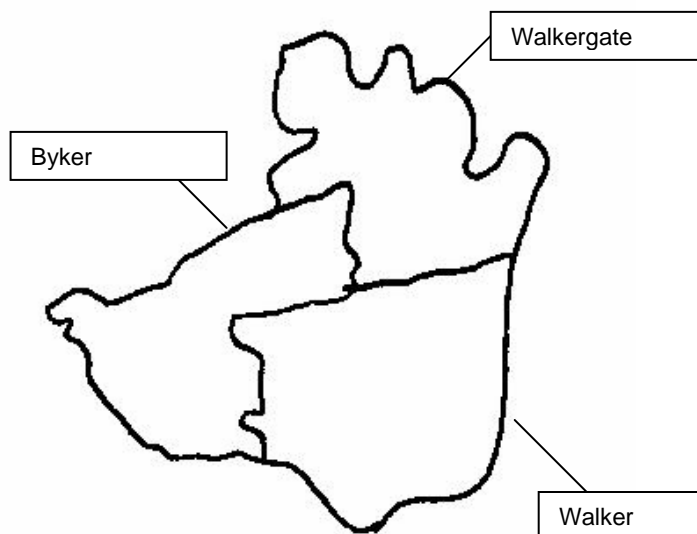
— Ward Boundary

4. Diagram of Outer East Wards: (i) pre and (ii) post boundary changes implemented in June 2004

(i) Pre-June 2004



(ii) Post June 2004



5. Transferable lessons: problems, solutions and conditions

1 The Master-planning process

Problem: The city council believe that the problems in Walker are too great to be handled through incremental and piecemeal change. A strategic, long-term vision that could deal with all aspects of large areas was sought. As a result, within the context of a city-wide urban renaissance strategy instigated by a small number of senior officers, the neighbourhood must succumb to a radical over-haul. Ingrained within the various versions of the draft master-plans for the area is the need to demolish some of the existing housing and replace it with new, better quality social housing and new private housing, which will attract in a new population.

Conditions: Although the process began as very top-down, with the support of community development workers, community representatives have been able to carve out a voice for their communities in the decision-making processes. Community representatives were on the committee that selected the preferred developer to oversee the master-planning process, Places for People. Several officers described this as a 'coup', especially since the community seemed able to sway support towards the selection of Places for People. However, subsequently the GfG process has been very complex and marked by uncertainty. There have been protracted discussions between the city council and PFP over the terms of the contract. PFP are now working under pressure to meet very tight deadlines and to deal with underlying tensions about whether the city council should have adopted this approach to delivering renaissance. Some officers have indicated that some senior management within the council and some elected members have been questioning the choice of developer. In this process there is a scope for a lot of misunderstanding and tension. It is felt that the consultants employed by PFP to draft master-plans do not really understand the residents of Walker – as for example reflected in quite radical design proposals. The original ideas for widespread changes across the neighbourhood have now been diluted. For example, Churchwalk originally one of four key areas identified for change has some been re-classified as a special area – that may become more of a priority over the long-term.

Solutions/Lessons: The major programme of change originally envisaged by the GfG promoters depends upon a range of shifts in terms of actors, practices and processes. Not all of these changes are within the control of the city council and even those which are, can be difficult to implement. The GfG process has created major expectations and raised large amounts of uncertainty. However there has been little management of this at the local level and even where some officers have been trying to manage and support the process locally they are not always able to communicate aspects of the process to the community. In the place of information given, myth and rumour can gain ground, which can help to undermine trust and create hostility amongst local residents. It therefore seems that active management is needed to keep expectations realistic and uncertainty to a minimum.

2 Young people in Walker: 1

Problem: Young people are not represented in local neighbourhood regeneration processes. They feel that their needs are low priority and that their views and opinions are not listened to. Hence they do not have much of a stake in the future of their neighbourhood.

Conditions: The idea that participation must be formalised is a culturally biased and exclusive form of neighbourhood governance. For young people formalised processes e.g. regular meetings and role-taking may not be appealing or appropriate. Hence, rather than recognising formalised processes and wishing to see these enhanced as suggested by elected members and community development workers it may be more appropriate to get more diverse and fluid participation events and processes. There seems little recognition so far that there are many different kinds of ways in which people feel able or want to contribute to neighbourhood governance.

At the moment some projects are working with very excluded young people and are working on very basic skills. Therefore, they are unlikely to attempt to engage them in very uncertain processes of neighbourhood governance. As one youth worker said:

'I am looking at ways of doing some work around Going for Growth but I will be waiting until there are some concrete plans that we can talk about.'

Solutions: There should be greater attempts to value different approaches and styles to be more inclusive. It is important not to ignore or forget the voices of young people just because they do not fit neatly into formal adult models of participation. It is counter-productive to try to make them fit in. Instead, nurturing the voices of young people in lots of different kinds of ways is needed. It is clear from talking to officers in this sector that they spend a lot of time trying to find bits of money to try and develop youth services. Better core funding would release people's time and effort to spend more time on projects with young people.

3 Young people in Walker 2

Problem: Officers from one of a range of statutory and voluntary youth projects, which exist in the neighbourhood, have noted that some of the most excluded young people are becoming an increasingly hard group to reach. This makes it even more unlikely that they will be engaging in processes in and around neighbourhood governance.

Conditions: Despite these problems, there are a number of agencies and actors who are doing out-reach with young people across the neighbourhood. Street sessions have been used to start to build up relationships with the young people. But there is concern that some people are not being reached at all. However, in the past Walker Park has provided a focal point for informal work with young people. For example, one play worker stayed on voluntarily in the evenings in Walker Park and was perceived by many working in the sector as providing a significant support structure for young people. She is now working in a different part of the city following an OFSTED inspection of the service. The loss of resources and intensive management and maintenance of the park represents a huge loss to young people in the area in social as well as physical terms.

Lessons: One of the lessons to be learnt from the approach was that support to young people was best delivered, in part at least places where young people went. This kind of informal access was clearly valued by some people and seen as problematic by others – but it did provide another opportunity for young people to engage. Sometimes some of the valuable relationship building work being done with difficult to reach groups is very much behind the scenes and not necessarily recognised and valued.

4 Tensions between representative and participatory democracy

Problem: Walker has a very deep-seated dependence on the city council, as exemplified by the high levels of local authority housing. The effects of the modernising government agenda have been to curtail political powers both through the increasing control exerted by central government and by the shift towards cabinet style leadership and community engagement at the local level. This has served to erode the powers and status of many of the elected representatives. There is a rising tension between enabling community networks and at the same time be concerned about the level of power they exert. The community networks become vehicles of legitimizing policy making, but are not free to contribute to the shape of future effectively.

Conditions: The bringing in of outside developers to work alongside community and council challenges further the role of the elected representative. Whilst the councillors have in some respects been able to support this opening out process, there has also been a tendency to withdraw support when the opportunities arise, which suggests that old ways of working might be just as effective. A key example of this has been the promise of ship-building on the Tyne and a multi-million land package sale of land adjacent to Walker Riverside. These have tended to pull elected representatives back to past ideas and past ways of working.

Solutions/ Lessons: Elected representatives are subject to increasing amount of scrutiny. Even where there is a willingness to respond positively to the new context, breaking with past

ways is difficult and there needs to be support for the councillors to help them adopt new approaches and styles more in keeping with new governance systems. Some feel that the work that is invested in community development may need to be extended to the elected representatives as well.

5 Stories from the community

Problem: There is a sense of grievance over past decision-making processes and a sense of maltreatment amongst some local voluntary organisations and local residents. This has now accumulated as a stock of negative history.

Conditions: Official city council versions of events do not always match with the experiences of actors and interests. There is quite a strong official line, which comes down from the city council. One local voluntary representative described how issues seemed to 'slip around' as the city council seek to retain dominance over local policy processes - meaning that it was difficult to have open and honest discussions- particularly within the formal arenas of governance. Under such circumstances alternative versions of events can become over-blown and in addition rumour and myth can abound. It is wearing for other actors to keep attempting to tell the story from their perspective. It is also providing blockages in the GfG process.

Solution/ Lesson: There needs to be a more inclusive history of neighbourhood and its governance, which allows for community perspectives and reflections. Without this the official version will remain a source of contention and conflict. The city council and perhaps other statutory organisations need to allow the space and time for other stories to be told and to be heard. This would allow people to record their grievances, have them acknowledged and hopefully allow processes to progress more smoothly, without having to revisit old conflicts repeatedly.

6 New ethnic minorities

Problem: The arrival of asylum seekers is on one hand contributing to a more cosmopolitan neighbourhood creating cultural and ethnic diversity. On the other, a very vulnerable group of people are arriving in a neighbourhood in which some local people already have considerable grievances about their own situation.

Condition: People arriving into the neighbourhood as asylum seekers and refugees, may have fled their country of origin their family and friends. People working in projects which offer support, find that many of these people need emotional and social support, which is only exacerbated if there are tensions with local people who perceive that they are receiving preferential treatment.

Solution/ Lesson: Project workers paid and voluntary are making efforts to build bridges between the asylum seekers / refugees and the local residents by encouraging relationship building in a very incremental way. This might involve workers talking one to one with local residents and encouraging them to attend a local social event. There is a recognition that building relationships and trust will be a slow and ongoing processes which needs to be handled sensitively.

6. Newcastle City Council Directorates

A series of changes have recently been implemented in the structure of the city council. Diagram (i) shows the directorates operating over most of the duration of the research period. Diagram (ii) shows the new structure of the city council.

Diagram (i)

Chief Executives

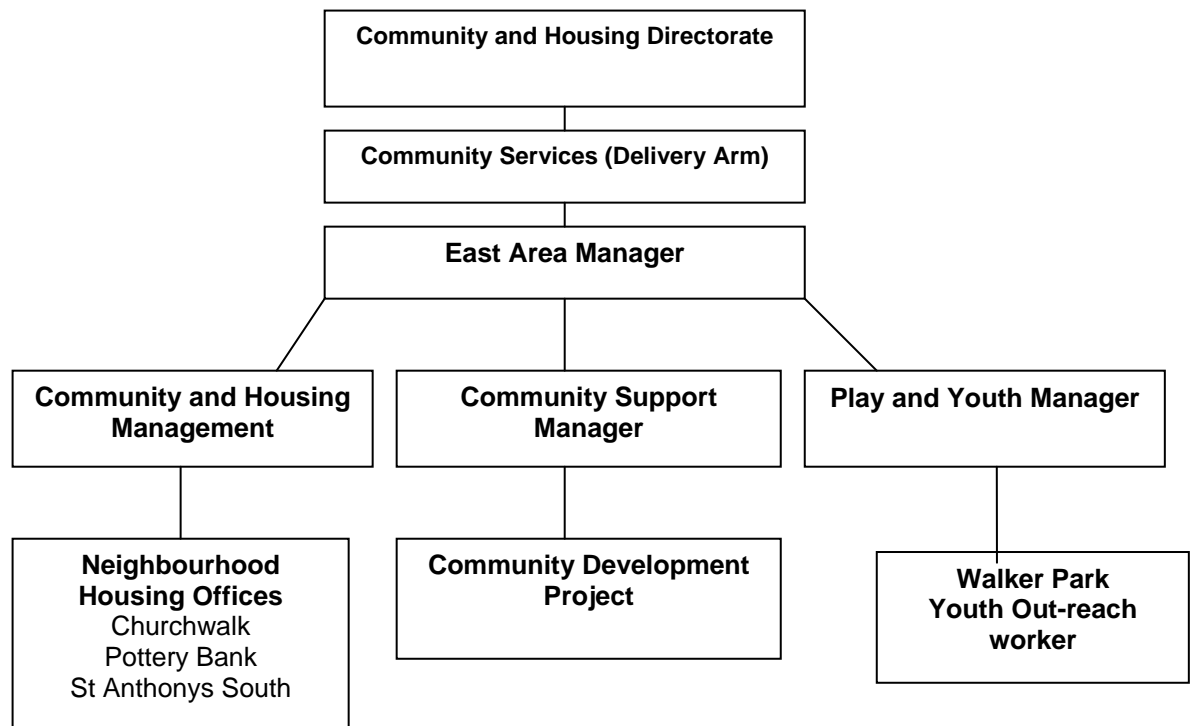
Cityworks	Community & Housing	Education & Libraries	Enterprise, Environment & Culture	Social Services & Strategic Support
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Diagram (ii)

<i>Chief Executives</i>					
<i>City Service</i>	<i>Your Homes Newcastle</i>	<i>Neighbourhood* Services</i>	<i>Education & Libraries</i>	<i>Enterprise, Environment & Culture</i>	<i>Social Services</i>

* Neighbourhood Services now includes Leisure Services, Parks and the Community Support section of the city council.

7. Pathway showing Newcastle City Council's Community and Housing Directorate



8. An illustration of local institutional arrangements

